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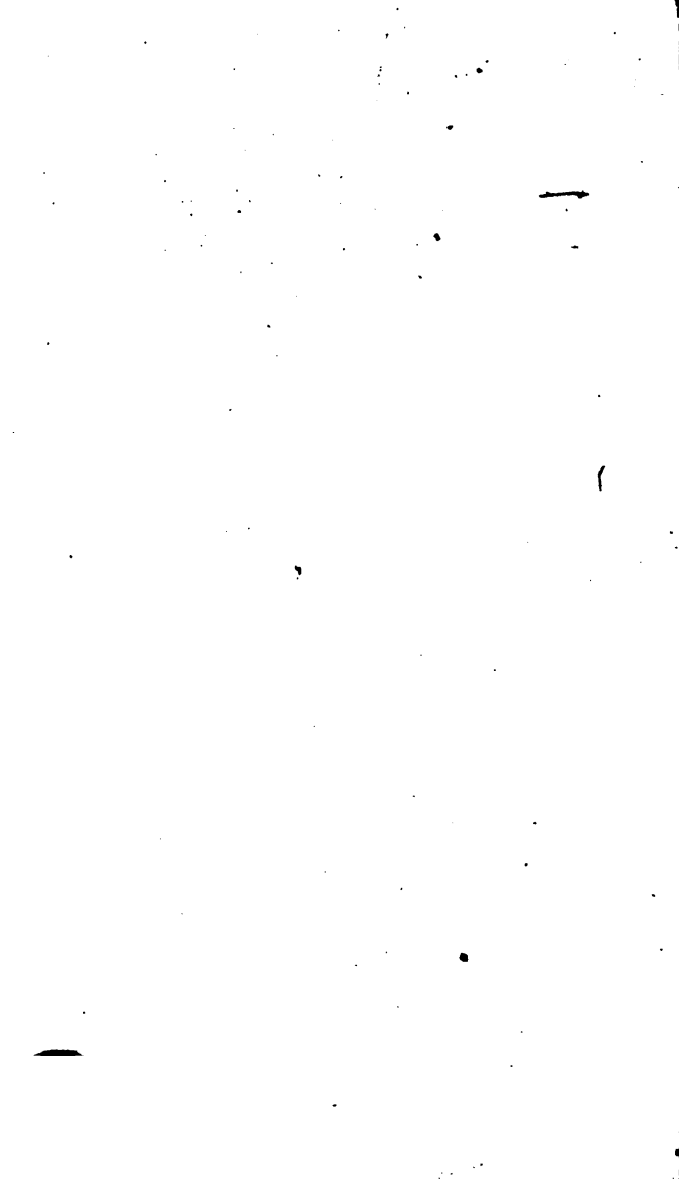




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THE
ANGLER IN THE LAKE DISTRICT;
OR,
PISCATORY COLLOQUIES
AND
FISHING EXCURSIONS
IN
WESTMORELAND AND CUMBERLAND.

BY
JOHN DAVY, M.D., F.R.S., Etc.

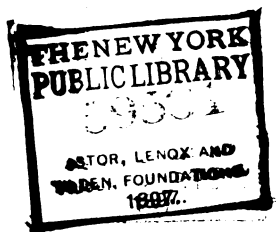
—
REV. W. W. W.
"And, O ye fountains, meadows, hills, and groves;
Think not of any severing of our loves."

WORDSWORTH.



LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, LONGMANS, & ROBERTS.

1857.



"Remember that the wit and invention of mankind were bestowed for other purposes than to deceive silly fish; and that however delightful Angling may be made to appear, it ceases to be innocent when used otherwise than a recreation."

ISAAC WALTON.

WALTON
AND
WALTON

LONDON:
Printed by SPOTTISWOODE & Co.
New-street Square.

DEDICATORY NOTE.

The Angler to his Friend.

DEAR AMICUS,

Two years have gone by since I addressed you last — two short years — yet how pregnant of events — of heroical feats of arms in the field, of feeble doings in council, and their inevitable consequence — national losses, and all but national disgrace.

The even tenor of the Angler's way and those pleasant journeyings we have had together, described in the following pages, are a remarkable contrast to the scenes we might have witnessed in the East, and the horrors we

might have been sharers of there, had our offered services been accepted.

As our art is “the contemplative man’s recreation,” and we have so enjoyed it together, can I do better than inscribe this little volume to you as a *donum amicitiae*, and through you to all gentle lovers of the angle, and of scenery and scenes such as those of the Lake District, — once the favourite haunts of the angler, and which might be so again, could unlawful fishing be prevented?

I am,

Your loving Friend,

PISCATOR.

Lesketh How, Ambleside:
December, 1856.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the following pages the Author, availing himself of his leisure, has endeavoured to give an account of those parts of the Lake District which are most interesting to the angler and tourist.

The form of dialogue which he has adopted, so tempting and favourable to varied discussion, has often led him on to the consideration of other matters than piscatory, and some of them of higher moment, such as the instincts of animals, the poets' homes, and kindred subjects, for the introduction of which he trusts he may be pardoned so long as Angling deserves to be called "the contemplative man's recreation."



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THE
ANGLER IN THE LAKE DISTRICT.

COLLOQUY I.

The Angler's Home. Table Talk.

AMICUS.

LOOKING out at my bedroom window, on rising this morning, I involuntarily exclaimed, "My friend has chosen well the spot for his retirement!"—the pastoral valley was so bright below, lighted up by a gleam of sunshine;—the little stream, winding through it, swollen by the night's rain, making music;—the hill opposite, bounding the valley, which I think you call Loughrigg, so charming in its fine form and varied surface of coppice, grove, and

meadow ; and your beautiful lake, your Windermere, partly seen where the valley expands in the distance.

PISCATOR. I am well content with my choice : to me, it has much to recommend it ; climate, scenery, and quietude, and this without solitude. I hope, after the fatigues of yesterday, you slept well, and are refreshed.

AMICUS. That I did, and with great enjoyment of my cool bed. I thought of tropical heat, and the tropical annoyance of insects, and enjoyed it the more. Have you ever hot nights here ?

PISCATOR. I may say never ; and like you, having felt, more than I ever wish to feel again, the oppressive night's heat of the tropics, and of the south of Europe and of the East in summer, the coolness of the nights here, with the absence of insects within doors, I hold to be one of the blessings of the place. So cool is it even in the height of summer early and late, that we are seldom without a fire in the morning and evening ; — this is a comfort — a word, by the by, untranslatable into the languages of the East, owing, I presume, to the want of the reality.

AMICUS. But have you not more rain than you wish, and less sunshine? And have you not, in consequence, too damp an atmosphere, and too wet a soil?

PISCATOR. There is a belief to that effect; but I think it is held only by those not personally acquainted with the district. It is true that the quantity of rain that falls here is great; but not so the number of rainy days. The difference is chiefly in the heaviness of the showers: a fall of two inches of rain in the twelve hours is not at all uncommon. In many parts of England, where the yearly amount of rain is vastly less, the number of rainy days is even greater. The pouring rain, the heaviest, is most frequently followed by a clear sky, as if the atmosphere were purged and purified by it. Moreover, owing to the peculiarity of our soil, the absence of clay,—the peculiarity of the surface, one of almost uninterrupted declivities,—the rain rapidly runs off, feeding those innumerable rills, those many rivers and lakes, which constitute so marked and beautiful a feature of the district, leaving the roads dry and clean. And this reminds me of an anecdote of our great poet,

which I heard him himself relate. What think you induced him to take up his abode here? You may suppose it was the surpassing beauty of its scenery. No such thing; none of those poetical elements which he so finely describes in his poem, written on the banks of the Wye, tempted him; or in these other lines, —

“Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald turf,
Bare hills and valleys full of caverns, rocks,
And audible seclusions, dashing lakes,
Echoes and water-falls and pointed crags,
That into music touch the passing wind.”

No, it was none of these, but the dry, clean roads, so favourable for walking exercise. Pray remember how different this district would be, were it not so amply supplied with rain. It would no longer be a lake district; no longer a pastoral district: desolation would take the place of fertility; a repulsive, arid aspect the place of the attractive verdant covering now so delightful. Even as it is, we have rather to complain of times of drought, to which the country is subject, than to excess of rain; — a drought of three or four weeks, drying up our springs and almost our streams, withering and arresting the growth of our pastures, as un-

pleasing in its effects on the eye, as it is trying to the interests of the farmer. Now, let us sit down to breakfast; after which, we will, if you please, make the tour of our little valley, and visit spots which I am sure will interest you, both for their intrinsic beauty, and the minds associated with them. Fox How, which from the window you may see peering above the trees, shall be one of them, the Holiday Retreat of the gifted and energetic Arnold; and Rydal Mount, not more than half a mile distant, the beloved home of Wordsworth, and worthy of him, shall be another; not to mention other and minor notabilities.

AMICUS. Now that we are at this social meal, indulge me with some further particulars of your district; for, by what you have said, you have excited my curiosity. Being in the midst of mountains, have you not severe winters? And having so much rain, have you not a proportional amount of snow?

PISCATOR. No, indeed; we have neither the one nor the other; and so we are favoured. Our winters are comparatively mild; and what is remarkable, we have comparatively little snow; —a happy circumstance, for were it as you

suppose, we should be buried in snow, and have to lead a terrible winter life. Our valleys stand but little above the level of the sea: this circumstance, and the proximity of the sea on either side, and our deep lakes and other collections of water, such as the smaller lakes or tarns, and the innumerable springs and streams, may account for the absence of intense winter cold, and in part also, though not so distinctly, for the little snow that falls.

AMICUS. Your explanation seems satisfactory; collections of water seeming to be the great moderators of temperature, absorbing heat in summer, giving it out in winter, and so conducing to an equilibrium. I have often thought how great are our obligations to the sea, and that we are hardly grateful enough for its benefits.

PISCATOR. For which of our common benefits are we sufficiently grateful, whether it be the beautiful face of nature that delights us, the atmosphere with its vital air that we breathe, or the fertile earth that supports us! As to the sea, I may mention another circumstance in connection with it, affording further scope for gratitude. There was, there is good

ground for belief, a time when England was not an island, but a portion of the Continent, and when, before other and distant terrestrial changes had taken place, not having its shores washed by a warm sea, such as the Gulf-stream, it was subject to such severe winters, that these our valleys, in their length and breadth, were the seat of glaciers, of the existence and action of which we have here everywhere proof, as I shall have pleasure, in the excursions which I hope we shall make together, to point out to you.

AMICUS. You spoke of the absence of clay in the district, as one of its happy peculiarities. How is that, especially as the rocks of the district are, I understand, chiefly of slate,—clay-slate?

PISCATOR. Of metamorphic clay-slate; that is, of slate that has been subjected to an indurating cause, — an action rendering it hard, and little liable to disintegrate, such as that of heat. There is reason to believe that, before the glacier period, there might have been a fiery one, when the effect I allude to was produced. Moreover, owing to the heavy rains, and the little stagnant water in the district, hardly an opportunity is afforded for the accumulation of

clay. Clay is composed of disintegrated particles of extreme fineness most easily suspended in water, and consequently can never find their rest till they are carried to a place of rest from the mountains where abraded, and from the higher levels, to the plains and lower levels; and thus transported,—happily from regions where clay is less needed, that is, where there is most rain, to those where it is most wanted, the plains, where there is less rain,—and being specially retentive of moisture, and giving it out slowly, it thus, in a manner, compensates for the deficiency.

AMICUS. How good are these potted fish which I have been enjoying along with your eulogy of the district! Are they the famed charr of your lake, or trout? One pleasant property belonging to them is their freedom from bones. Is this in consequence of solution in the process of cooking, or one of the felicities specially belonging to a fish of your favoured country?

PISCATOR. You are not serious, I know, in asking the latter question; but I will answer you seriously. As to your first question, were you at an inn, the waiter probably would call

the fish charr, the charr being in greater estimation, especially for potting; but if you inquired of the cook who prepared them, and she would tell the truth, most likely you would be informed that they are trout, such as you have been eating. Know that a large proportion of the so-called potted charr is trout; the distinction is difficult; and if the trout be of good quality, it is not, when thus prepared, inferior to charr. As to your second question, if you carefully examine the fish you are eating, you will find that it retains its bones; but that, instead of being hard and resisting, as they originally were, they are now soft and yielding. This change is the effect of the cooking — of the baking process by which the animal matter, the cartilaginous portion of the bone, has been rendered almost gelatinous. It is by an analogous process that bones have been softened so as to admit of being easily chopped and divided for agricultural use, viz., by steaming or boiling under pressure.

AMICUS. Might not a small quantity of vinegar be added with advantage? It would promote, as an antiseptic, the keeping of the fish, and might do away with the necessity of

covering them with butter to exclude the air. In Greece and the Ionian Islands, vinegar is much used for the like purpose; in this way quails are preserved as well as fish, and most easily and economically.

PISCATOR. And salmon, you know, in this country. Though vinegar is wholesome, it is not every one who likes vinegar; and I may mention, as an economical hint, that if the fish be potted for immediate use, the covering of butter may be dispensed with; they will keep untainted for at least a week, and even in the height of summer.

AMICUS. Having got on this subject, I shall be glad to know if you can inform me what is the best method of potting; so that, should I be at any time successful in my distant angling expeditions, I may have it in my power to instruct a cook in the method, and I may have the benefit of it in conveying home some of my spoils.

PISCATOR. I cannot do better than let you have the receipt of an experienced potter of charr, a worthy neighbour of mine, and a woman of skill in most things that come within her sphere of action, — a woman so

worthy, and so esteemed for higher qualities, that her portrait in her old age has been painted, paid for by a friendly subscription, and presented to her daughters. It is as follows, and in her own words: — “One dozen of charr, dress and wipe with a dry cloth; strew a little salt in and over them, and let them lie all night; then wipe them with a dry cloth, and season with one ounce of white pepper, quarter of an ounce of cayenne, half an ounce of pounded cloves, and a little mace. Clarify two pounds of butter. Then put them with their backs down into a pot lined with paper; and then pour the butter over, and bake four hours in a slow oven.”

There are other methods of preserving fish not undeserving of the attention of the angler. I shall mention one which I saw practised in the wilds of Connemara, and in my behalf, by the very civil, and I may add very handsome, hostess of “Flyn’s or Half-way House.” The white trout, as fresh as possible, as soon as they were brought to the inn after the day’s fishing, were divided longitudinally, sprinkled thickly with salt and sugar, and then left to dry. After two or three days they would be fit for packing, and would keep a considerable time,

affording an article relishable at the breakfast table, at least by many.

AMICUS. Thank you for this information; and now let me remind you of what you were about to mention, from the letter before you, which you thought would interest me, and I have no doubt will.

PISCATOR. In this letter which I have just received from a friend, an ardent angler and a very accurate observer, and as truthful a relator, he mentions an incident strikingly showing how low is the sense of feeling in the trout. The incident was this: He was fishing in Derbyshire, in the Lathkin,—that river celebrated by Izaak Walton as affording the best trout in England;—he caught one of herring size, an under-size according to the rules for angling there. In extricating the hook, which he did hastily, a portion of the upper jaw was torn off. The fish, as he could not keep it, he threw back into the river. Returning an hour after, he made a cast at the same spot, hooked a fish, and on landing it, to his surprise, found it was the identical one he had taken before, minus the half of its jaw. What think you of this? Could you have imagined it?

AMICUS. Unless so well authenticated, I could not have believed it.

PISCATOR. Considering the predatory habits of fish, how subject they are to accidents, this low degree of sensitiveness has no doubt been kindly and wisely bestowed on them. We are too apt to reason from our own feelings concerning the feelings of other animals, and thereby make great mistakes. Different races of animals are certainly endowed with different degrees of feeling ; we have a rough criterion of the degree in the nervous system of each. Shakspeare it is, I think, who says—

“ The sense of death is most in apprehension ;
And the poor beetle which we tread upon
In corporal suffering feels a pang as great
As when a giant dies.”

Here we have truth and error mixed, and admirably expressed, and most humanely. The truth is, and it is most true, that the sense of death is most in apprehension, dying being mostly without any acute pain, a state of stupor or insensibility commonly preceding it. The error is, the implied idea that the insect and man are equally sensitive.

AMICUS. I am glad to hear you speak thus,

and to have enforced the fact that the feeling of the salmonidæ—for I suppose the incident you have related applies to the whole of the family—is so obtuse, inasmuch as too often, when I pull a beautiful trout out of the water and see it writhing in the act of extricating the hook from its mouth, I am seized with compunction of conscience, and feel as I would not wish to feel for the deed I have committed.

PISCATOR. You have forgotten the maxim to kill your fish before extracting the hook. But passing that by, I can assure you that with more practice you will lose your over-acute feeling. It is remarkable how habit reconciles one to acts: I may mention an anecdote in illustration of this. When a student engaged in some physiological inquiries on the blood, I had occasion to ask the assistance of a butcher; it was to hold the head of a sheep whilst I laid bare the jugular vein of the animal. It required a little careful manipulation with the scalpel, some gentle strokes of the knife after the first incision, which could occasion little pain and were attended with hardly any loss of blood. Suddenly, the butcher let go his hold of the head, turning away, saying “he could not stand

it,"—he who would have had no hesitation in thrusting his knife into the throat of the sheep, or knocking down with his pole-axe a bullock. The one which "he could not stand" was new to him; the other, to which he was indifferent, he was accustomed to. There is another quality befriending the over-sensitive angler,—that of abstraction. Eager in the sport, at the instant of success, the mind is more intent on the capture, the prize gained, than on the feelings of the captive. Even when man is contending with man, this is the case, whether the struggle be that of the athlete, or of the warrior. The surgeon, in performing an operation, is a good example. It is related of Cheselden that, before entering on an operation, he was always affected constitutionally in a very disagreeable manner; but that when engaged in it, his unpleasant sensations all vanished, his mind was so concentrated on what he was about. A friend of mine, a surgeon, has told me of his own experience, similarly illustrative, how, when operating, he did not hear—that is, he was not conscious of—the screams of his patient (it was before chloroform was in use), though so loud that they attracted

the attention of persons in the street, their attention being free, while his was otherwise directed.

AMICUS. This, indeed, is a singular instance of an unobserved impression; for of course the ear must have been affected. The wave of sound must have been conveyed to the tympanum, though in vain as to the production of intelligent cognition.

PISCATOR. How many lost or unrecognised impressions are there of the same kind, though not so remarkable; indeed, how few of the ever-flowing impulses of light, from visible objects, do we perceive, unless the mind be prepared to see them!—and as regards the more delicate, unless the observer be trained for the purpose, they, as is well known to the astronomer, take place unnoticed. Is it not Cicero who said, “How many things does the painter observe, which we do not see?” Moreover as to pain, even in the instance of man,—and we may well suppose it is not less so in the instance of fish,—the memory of it is of short duration. How soon is the suffering from sea sickness forgotten! How soon does the mother forget the pains of labour! Were it otherwise, how few

would go down a second time to the "great deep!" how few would be the second births!

AMICUS. Yet, as the adage has it, "the burnt child dreads the fire."

PISCATOR. In its destructive, consuming agency, and by its increasing heat with proximity, it gives constant warning.

AMICUS. You just now spoke in praise of the trout of the Lathkin. What I have heard of them is not so favourable: I have been assured by a friend, who has often fished that well-preserved stream, that a trout in good condition is rarely to be taken there.

PISCATOR. Izaak Walton is my authority, and the time, of course, the past. He, speaking of the stream, describes it as "by many degrees the purest and most transparent he had ever seen, either at home or abroad"—(he had never been in Westmoreland),—"and as breeding the reddest and best trouts in England." These are his words. As to the real quality of these trout at present, I agree with your friend; they may have been excellent, but now they certainly are not: all I have taken, excepting the smaller, have borne marks of being ill fed; they were soft, lank and flabby.

AMICUS. Is there any obvious cause for the change, supposing that, in Walton's time, they deserved the reputation they had for excellence? Is the quality of the water altered? Is it less pure or transparent than it was?

PISCATOR. Still the little stream retains its beauty, as regards purity and transparency. The water, I fancy, is not in fault. You spoke of the river as carefully preserved. My belief is, strange as it may seem, that here lies the cause. Let me explain. Owing to the severe restriction on fishing this stream, so few fish are taken from it that it is overstocked; it has more in its waters than they can properly support, and the consequence is, that food failing, or, what is equivalent, food of a good quality, the effects are exhibited in a falling off in the condition of the fish. I scarcely need remind you, that one rule is applicable to all living things, whether animals or vegetables, of whatever class, a population or herd, trees or fishes: for their proper growth, support, and well-being there must be an adequate supply of food, adequate space, adequate air; stint them of these, and deterioration follows. If you plant too thickly and do not thin, you have

worthless wood ; if you encourage breeding, as in the instance of the trout, and carefully, too carefully, preserve the fish, they will soon multiply in excess, and be in danger of starving each other. Were their numbers thinned, so that what remained might have a sufficiency of food, I have no doubt the trout of the Lathkin would soon be worthy of, and recover, their old repute. I have known instances of the like kind, of waters overstocked having fish of indifferent quality, and of their improving in quality and size on their numbers being diminished.

AMICUS. I fancy, from what you say, you are a disciple of Malthus, who, if I recollect rightly, advocates the principle, that the amount of population must be regulated by the amount of supply of subsistence.

PISCATOR. In a large sense, I adopt his doctrine, which, in principle, I think unimpeachable, so long as man—and the same may be said of other animals, and of plants,—in brief, of all organic living things—cannot exist without food ; and so long as the tendency is in the instance of man, and of other animals inhabiting a suitable climate,—that is, a

climate favourable to health, life, and increase,—to increase in a higher ratio than the ordinary means of subsistence, a check is needed, that the mouths be not too many for the available food, or, in other words, that the increase of the one should bear a due proportion to that of the other. Even intelligent man feels the moral check too feeble. We are assured in Holy Writ that we shall always have the poor with us, which all experience confirms—a proof of the inadequacy of this check. Amongst brute animals—and the remark especially applies to fish—the only natural checks are feebleness, disease, and death, with the evil of degeneracy affecting the whole race.

AMICUS. Notwithstanding all the objections which have been made to the doctrines of Malthus, I cannot but think he is right, and, like you, I can hardly avoid adopting his principles. When in Constantinople, I witnessed what seemed to me in exact accordance with them, in the instance of the canine race, there free and unowned, living as best they can, and one hardly knows how. Now, what is remarkable, each quarter of the city has a limited number, and tolerably stationary, I was

assured, one year with another, neither increasing nor diminishing, the means of subsistence being their limit, there being no other; for they are most jealous of rights as to quarters, as much so as if they were fully indoctrinated in the principles we are talking about. If one ventures to pass his boundary into an adjoining quarter, he is immediately attacked; and woe befall him, unless he is able to make a precipitate retreat.

PISCATOR. It is curious to trace the resemblances that are observable in the societies of animals and of men, and how many qualities they have in common. An interesting book I have no doubt might be written on the subject by a competent person, tending to show that the line between instinct and reason, or, more properly speaking, intelligence, is nowise a strongly marked one; that in some degree, in proportion to the similitude of organisation, there is a similitude of nature, and that the highest in the scale amongst brutes are but little inferior to the lowest in the scale of our own species; in other words, inasmuch as the reasoning faculty is connected with the brain in man, so may the instinctive faculty be con-

nected with the brain and nervous system of brute-animals; and as man in some of his actions is guided by instinct, so brutes in some of their doings may be guided by reason. Remember the analogy that exists, with differences, comparing the nervous system in different classes of animals! May not such a vast variety of structure, associated as we know it to be with as great a variety of instincts, be the corporeal cause of that variety?

AMICUS. If not asking too much, I should be glad to hear you illustrate what you say by examples, general propositions being so easily made, and of so little value. But I will not task you to enter into the anatomical and physiological part of the subject: that had better be reserved for a winter evening and the fireside.

PISCATOR. The subject, even limited as you wish, is so large, that I hesitate on entering upon it, for I am nowise prepared to do it justice; however, to give you some definite idea of my meaning, I will mention a few facts that have come under my notice, or that I have heard of well authenticated,—facts displaying conduct on the part of brutes very

like that of man under the same circumstances. When in Ceylon many years ago, a friend of mine, who was Deputy Quartermaster-General, consulted me about an elephant belonging to his department, one that had a deep burrowing sore on its back, just over the back-bone, which had long resisted the ordinary mode of treatment employed. After due examination I recommended, as necessary, the free use of the knife, that issue might be given to the accumulated matter; but no one of the ordinary attendants would undertake the operation. Being assured by my friend that the brute would behave well under it, I undertook it. The elephant was not bound; he was made to kneel down, his keeper at his head: with an amputating knife, using all my force, I made the incision requisite through his tough integuments; he did not flinch, but rather inclined towards me when using the knife, and uttered merely a low, as it were suppressed groan; in short, he behaved as like a human being as possible, as if conscious, as I believe he was, that the pain inflicted was unavoidable, and that the operation, as I am happy to say it proved, was for

his benefit. From the elephant, I will pass to the dog. The then Governor of Ceylon, the late Sir Robert Brownrigg, had one of more than ordinary sagacity; he always accompanied his master, being allowed so to do, except on particular occasions, as on going to church, or council, or to inspect the troops, when the general always wore his sword. Now, when he saw the sword girded on, he would give his attendance no further than the outer door; without a word being said he would return and wait the coming back of his master, patiently waiting up stairs at the door of his private apartment. Here is another instance: once, when fishing in the Highlands, I saw a party of sportsmen with their dogs cross the stream, the men wading, the dogs swimming, with the exception of one who stopped on the bank piteously howling; after a few minutes, he suddenly ceased and started off full speed for a higher part of the stream. I was able to keep him in view, and he did not stop till he reached a spot where a plank connected the banks, on which he crossed dry-footed and soon joined his companions. Are not these instances of memory associated with a certain degree of reasoning? I

shall mention another, in which memory — experience — was associated with feeling. It also occurred in Ceylon; it impressed me so much at the time that I made a note of it, which, with your leave, I will read to you, the note-book being at hand. “Kandy, April 7th, 1818, 4 P.M.” (pray endure my tediousness): the note proceeds:—“This afternoon there has been a good deal of lightning, thunder, and rain. At this instant the lightning is vivid, and the thunder loud, bursting overhead, and rolling as it were from hill to hill. What surprises me is, that the birds are now unusually vocal; they seem to rejoice in the storm, as if conscious of its beneficial effects, like the inhabitants of the desert, who, when they see sheet lightning, hail it (according to Park) with acclamations as a sure indication of rain.” The account continues: “I cannot help listening attentively to the birds, and I am confident that not a note is interrupted by the loudest thunder. Their singing at this time is the more extraordinary, since had the weather been dry and fine, and of course hot, they would at this hour of the day have been silent. How different (I add) is the effect of a thunder storm in England, where

it is generally accompanied by hail or cold rain ! Beasts and birds retire to cover, and keep a mournful silence, or utter notes of distress. Comparing the two,—the birds of England, and Ceylon,—may I not say that they are as differently affected by the thunder storm, as the sailor on the ocean apprehensive of, and the traveller in the desert welcoming, its effects ? And may it not be inferred, that birds as well as men are taught by experience, have the same confidence in the uniformity and constancy of nature, and are under the influence of associated impressions ? ”

AMICUS. The incident is an interesting one, and I thank you for the relation so precisely given. It brings to my recollection one nowise, like yours, of a poetical kind ; but belonging, I think you will agree with me, to the same category. When in the West Indies, officially employed, every morning, on week days, I had to drive to my office. Near my house were many negro huts, and poultry, not a few, the property of their inmates. No sooner did my carriage pass into the common road, than the fowls gave chase ; it was a regular occurrence. Questioning my intelligent native driver

on the subject, he pointed out the cause, — the hungry, ill-fed poultry expected some droppings from the horses. Close also to my house, an industrious man, who had been a slave, was intently occupied in reclaiming a piece of rocky ground, and occasionally used gunpowder to break the rocks. This was in hearing of the same poultry : I watched them sometimes when an explosion took place ; the sound startled them at the instant, but they did not rush towards the spot. I need not draw the inference. Pray proceed.

PISCATOR. Your instance is a good one. The next I shall give betokens, I think,—and I hope you will agree with me,—a kind of moral sense. The cook in the house of a friend of mine, a lady on whose accuracy I can rely, from whom I had the anecdote, missed a marrow-bone : suspicion fell on a well-behaved dog, a great favourite, and up to that time distinguishedly honest ; he was charged with the theft ; he hung down his tail, and for a day or two was altered in his manner, having become shy, sullen, and sheepish, if I may use the expression—for want of a better ; and so he continued, till, to the amusement of the cook,

he brought back the bone, and laid it at her feet; when, with the restoration of the stolen property, he resumed his cheerful manner. Now, how can we interpret this conduct of the dog, unless we suppose that he was aware he had done amiss, and that the evil doing preyed on him till he had made restitution? Even in animals most under the influence of pure instinct, we often see adaptation of means to ends, under new circumstances, very like the prompting of reason. A pair of swallows have constructed their nest under the eaves of my dressing-room window. On their arrival, they generally find it broken into and used by the house-sparrow, which breeds earlier in the spring than the swallow. If the weather be favourable for repairing it, they immediately undertake the work; but, if otherwise,—if it be a time of drought, when it may be difficult to find moist clay, or, could it be found, to use it advantageously,—they do not attempt the repair, but wait patiently for the first rains and damp weather; which being come, they no longer procrastinate. Animals, we know, are capable, of a certain degree of education; the ape, the bear, the dog, the horse, afford good examples.

And, as you are aware, what is taught in some instances, becomes in a manner hereditary ; in this respect again, as it is believed by many, resembling the human race.

AMICUS. I thank you for these few details. I am willing to adopt your notion of the approximation of the higher order of brutes to our own race, in faculties as well as in organisation ; and, for the sake of humanity, I wish it were generally adopted.

PISCATOR. If true, I could wish it adopted ; not else. As regards humanity, I doubt its having any material influence, reflecting how gently and kindly brutes are treated by the gentle and kind ; and how rudely and cruelly treated are beings of our own kind by the rude by nature, and cruel.

AMICUS. Yet, on the idea you entertain, may there not be a greater disposition to show kindness to animals, and consideration for their feelings, than on the opposite presumption of an altogether absence of resemblance ? In training, more I believe is effected by gentle means than by harsh, by encouragement than by fear ; by gaining the regard of the animal, than by exciting its terror. We know that

animals are capable of attachment, and seem to have a decided sense — many of them at least — of what is amiable and good. How much nobler and more pleasing is this view of their character, and how much more grateful a conduct in accordance towards them, than the considering them mere brutes, and treating them as brutes most commonly are treated!

PISCATOR. I grant your views are pleasing, and may have some influence if inculcated and adopted. But *there* is the difficulty in this busy world of ours, in which the business or pleasure of the hour occupies almost entirely most minds, and in which too seldom is there just consideration given for the feelings of our fellow-men.

AMICUS. You spoke of the Lathkin as too strictly preserved. That surprises me; — I mean the accomplishment of the thing, being told by you of the difficulties attending it here in your Lake District. Pray how is it effected?

PISCATOR. What is difficult in Westmoreland, almost impracticable, is easy in Derbyshire. In the one county — ours — landed property is much more divided than in the other;

and the yeomanry class, under the designation of statesmen, is still a large one, though their number is diminishing. In consequence, perhaps, of there being few great properties here with manorial rights, the rivers and lakes have been considered in a manner free; and not only have the small farmers, but also the labouring men, whether in village or country, indulged themselves in angling, affording proof how general is the taste for it. In the latter county, on the contrary, this taste is checked; the landed properties are large; for instance, the river, the Lathkin mentioned, and the adjoining larger ones, the Wye and the Derwent, run through the domains of two great proprietors, the Dukes of Rutland and Devonshire. The aristocratic feeling is strong for the preservation of game; it is almost a distinctive mark; no right than that of fishing and shooting is more jealously maintained. Get permission, if you can, to wet a line in the Lathkin, and be assured you will not be half an hour, whether late or early on its banks, without having a visit from a keeper, and probably from another and another in the course of the day, who will require the pro-

duction of your credentials, and inspect them most inquisitorially. As to the labouring men thereabouts, fishing they never think of; they might as well think of doing any other impossible thing. Not only, if detected, would they be subject to fine or imprisonment, but they would be sure to be sent out of the country, being so much at the mercy of the great landlords. Even were an angling rod found in their cottage, they would have to rue the discovery. So lost are they to all interest in the sport, that I never saw a passing labourer stop to watch my doings, or to inquire after my success.

AMICUS. Such exclusiveness is almost to be regretted. I fear in Derbyshire, at least, the different classes are too wide apart, and that the peasantry have not that kindness shown them, which, as fellow-men, they are entitled to, and the exercise of which would be for the advantage of all concerned. Such a state approaches too nearly that of serfage, as serfage does too nearly that of slavery. I, for my part, would rather live amongst your freer peasantry with very indifferent angling, than in those princely territories under such absolute

rule and restricted water privileges. Surely the character of the peasantry must suffer.

PISCATOR. I think it does suffer, but I cannot say to what extent. The northern peasantry are distinguished for their bold and independent bearing, their rough manners and plain talk, and I hope I may add for simple honesty: of the Derbyshire peasantry I know less, and I am not prepared to give an opinion. And now, having finished our pleasantly protracted meal, let us prepare for our walk.

PISCATOR. Now we are alone, tell me how you liked our after breakfast walk.

AMICUS. It more than pleased, it delighted me; especially Rydal Mount, its house, its gardens, its terraces; so unpretending, so beautiful, everything so well preserved, and I should suppose, unaltered. When you kindly afforded me an opportunity of paying my respects to the revered widow of the poet, I could almost imagine myself in his presence, and realize what Rydal Mount was during his lifetime.

PISCATOR. Never was there a place so little

altered, so carefully and lovingly preserved. There is a moral charm in it heightening all its other charms. I am sure you will never forget them; I fear almost to talk about them, lest I should expose myself to the charge of sentimentality.

AMICUS. Truly the home of a good man and a great poet is a sacred place, *vatis sacra domus*, a subject for thoughtful musings rather than for common conversation: I respect your feeling. In coming here, you promised me a further pleasure, the exploring in your company some of your wilder fishing haunts; where, you told me, and I believe you, if we have not good angling, we shall have some compensation in the scenery.

PISCATOR. I well remember, and to-morrow, if you please, I will be your guide to one of our highest neighbouring tarns, where there are good trout, though not easily taken, and scenery of a kind that can hardly fail to interest you.



COLLOQUY II.

*Mountain Tarns. — Tarn Fishing. — Scenery
and Incidents.*

AMICUS.

HERE we are at last at Coodle Tarn, and though it is not a perfect *speculum Dianæ*, it reminds me in its form and mirror-like surface of that celebrated one at Albano, and yet how different are the accompaniments of the two. Here we are in profound solitude, not a vestige of human art apparent, or of man except a trace of his footsteps, of some angler's like ourselves impressed on the peaty ground.

PISCATOR. Truly the accompaniments are different. From the Italian tarn, or rather I should say from its elevated crater-like margin, the majestic dome of St. Peter's is in sight, the triumph of modern architecture, and on the intervening campagna, the old Roman aque-

ducts, hardly less impressive even in their ruins, both noble works. Yet, those around us are not less impressive or noble in their native wildness and grandeur,—the everlasting hills that were uplifted who can say how long before a stone of the “eternal city” was laid, and which will endure in all probability to the end of time, when not a stone of that city may be found standing one upon another.

AMICUS. Though it is calm, and against our angling, how delightfully cool and fresh is the air here! How charming the pure ethereal blue of the sky overhead appearing through the broken masses of white fleecy clouds! How fine the effects of the mountains looking southwards, chain after chain. I can count five, rising in succession, marked by different tints of grey passing into blue with the distance, and those nearer and loftier with their heads hid in, or partially seen through, the clouds!

PISCATOR. We are now at an elevation little short of 2000 feet, and consequently have a commanding view. Let me direct your attention to another feature of the scenery, that which gives the district its name. How many lakes do you see?

AMICUS. The more conspicuous mountains diverted my attention; now you direct it to them, I fancy I can distinguish four or five. Pray what are they?

PISCATOR. That immediately below us is Easedale Tarn, which is partly fed from this tarn, this probably nearly 1000 feet above it; the next is Grasmere; the next, Rydalmere; and the last and most distant, Windermere; the whole constituting one chain, and owing their origin to so many basin-like depressions in the ground formed when the mountains were uplifted, and their enduring character as lakes to the abundant supply of water in the form of rain with which this district is blessed.

AMICUS. How peculiar is the silence, as well as solitude of this lofty region. Since we have been here, the only sound I have heard has been that of the lone cuckoo, that "wandering voice." How different from the dale by which we ascended, which I think you called Far-Easedale; there even in its upper and wildest part, I was charmed with the pastoral sounds, the bleating of the sheep and lambs, making the solitude cheerful. Pray, has the sheep any note or cry of alarm? I fancy I heard one,

when we came upon them suddenly, and they ran off affrighted, something between a hiss and a whistle. Surely I was not mistaken !

PISCATOR. You were not. I believe the cry is peculiar to our mountain breed of sheep. It is well known to the shepherds. It denotes their wildness, and the wild sheep, I have read, uses the same note of alarm. The silence you speak of, is indeed peculiar, and worthy of note : commonly when I have been here, it has been less marked. I have rarely been here at this season without hearing, besides the wandering voice of the cuckoo, the shrill scream of the hawk, soaring over its eyrie, or the deep croak of the passing raven floating in mid-air, and to the angler, the more pleasing and cheering sound, that of the leaping trout. The perfect calm bodes us anglers no good. Were there a wind we should hear its music amongst the rocks, and might have a chance of success in our angling. I fancied when we stopt, after climbing the steep ascent of the mountain side, coming from Far-Easedale, that I saw you counting your pulse. If so, what was the result ?

AMICUS. My breathless state and my beating

heart reminding me of some former hints of yours, on the impropriety of elderly gentlemen attempting the ascent of mountains and its danger, I wished to have some exact evidence in my own case, and therefore I counted my pulse. To my surprise and almost alarm I found it exceedingly quick. However, now we have rested awhile in the cool air, I am so refreshed and easy in my feelings that we will attempt, if you please, the hill above, for the sake of the prospect, which I have no doubt must be glorious.

PISCATOR. Would that we were a few years younger, I will not say how many, then I should have no objection to the higher ascent, to climb the hill rising above us; I would even propose the ascent of the Langdale Pikes within two miles of where we are, or the mighty Scawfell not far distant, where, as the poet sings, you may be

“Awed, delighted, and amazed.”

But the time is past, not for the enjoyment in our case of the sublime pleasure, but for the attaining it without experiencing a degree of fatigue that would mar the pleasure and with-

out running a risk as regards health, which it is well to avoid. You allude to my former warnings briefly given. I have had many a trial in ascending mountains, as I know you have in your wanderings, and though I have not reached the greatest altitudes, I have been on some, as Etna, only second to them. The result of my experience, I may repeat, is that only the young, or at most those of middle life and with vigorous and unimpaired constitutions, should subject themselves to such labours, such trials, and I use the latter word advisedly, for I know no exercise so trying to the vital organs, or more endangering them. How often have I seen even young men, thoroughly overcome in ascending a mountain, and, having reached its summit, throw themselves on the ground, and there remain prostrate till it was time to descend, altogether incapable, from sheer fatigue, of the enjoyment they looked forward to when they set out. In the exertion of ascending, the strain is mainly on the heart, and indirectly through it on the lungs and nervous system, especially the brain. I have made some observations on these occasions on the pulse and respiration, the results of which

I may briefly mention in confirmation of your own. The pulse I have always found amazingly accelerated, and also the respirations; but without any marked increase of the temperature of the body, I mean of the deep seated parts, as shown by the thermometer placed under the tongue. The last mountain I ascended, was Goatfield in the island of Arran, in height only a little inferior to Scawfell, being 2900 feet above the level of the sea, from which it rises rapidly, the distance from the shore from Brodick, the village from which I started, being only about two miles and a half as it is roughly estimated. On reaching the summit, I counted my pulse and respirations; the pulse was 120 and bounding, the respirations 32 and laborious. After resting ten minutes, the respirations were diminished to 16, the pulse to 90; and after ten minutes more, to 14 and 84; ordinarily the one is about 13 or 14, the other about 50. Even after this rest, looking at the second hand of my watch I saw double, warning me of the danger of apoplexy. Such danger it is easy to understand, from the increased action of the heart, if, as is so often the case in advancing age, there is a weakened state of the

bloodvessels of the brain. A youth of seventeen accompanied me: his pulse also I counted when we reached the top, and found it to be 120. This I mention to show that the great acceleration of mine was not peculiar to me. No, my friend, let us confine ourselves to these middle heights, give up those ambitious aspirations, or, what may be better still, keep to our low and safe levels, the river, and the lake, and our gentle art.

AMICUS. Are you not pointing a moral? I dare say you are right, and that men of our standing would do well to leave to their juniors those labours, whether they be official, tasking the intellect, or pursuits tasking both mind and body, to the undertaking of which, a restless ambition too frequently increasing with years is the prompter.

PISCATOR. There is no harm in the moral application which was casual, and, in our case, little danger of being exposed to temptation, as we are neither general officers nor statesmen. Let me, however, modify my advice as to shunning altogether mountain heights. There are mountainous districts of easy reach; some two or three thousand feet above the level of the

sea, inhabited countries with passable carriage roads: these regions are very desirable abodes, especially within the tropics, for their pure and cool air, as well as for the grand scenery by which they are commonly surrounded. Such regions are well fitted for us, and if you please, you may attach a moral to the recommendation. To recur for an instant to the exercise of ascending mountains, I may state, that here in our district amongst the peasantry, heart complaints are of common occurrence attributable, and they commonly are so attributed, to this cause, the ascending the hills after their sheep, especially in winter, when, if there be snow on the fells, they have the additional fatigue and strain of carrying up hay. In our own instance to-day, we were imprudent, we ascended too fast, I suppose from a natural impatience to reach the tarn. We should have taken more time, and stopt at spots almost inviting rest, those little green terraces of beautiful pasture not of unfrequent occurrence, where, besides rest, we should have done well to have exercised our eyes whilst reposing our limbs, directing them to the dale below, and its bounding hills.

AMICUS. Even in our somewhat laborious ascent, I had an eye to them; and I was struck with the beauty of vegetation, all so fresh and verdant, the bracken in its tender green, ferns of many kinds, dwarfing as we ascended, the delicate pasture accounting well for the excellency of the mutton fed on it, and the many little flowering plants springing out of the turf, as if intended for ornament even in these wilds. Nor did the rocks escape my notice, so many detached in great masses, and in one spot especially, quite a ruin of rocks, a vast shattered heap at the foot of a precipice. Surely, judging from what I saw, these mountains which you call everlasting, are subject to decay and degradation!

PISCATOR. Yes, like all earthly things; yet I think we may call them everlasting. That they are lower than they once were, I have no doubt. These broken rocks to which you refer, and the vast collection of detritus now forming their sides, are demonstrative proofs. Probably when they were first elevated, their summits might have consisted of softer materials, because less subjected to the hardening influences which may have acted on the deeper parts; and at one period, I allude to the glacial period, they

might have been exposed to an agency greatly more destructive than any which they are now liable to suffer from. This, I say, is probable; and remember, that now there is, as it were, a conservative element in action,—the beautiful turf, which, in clothing the sides of the hills, protects them in a great measure from the wasting and destructive effects of frost and rain. As we cannot fish, there not being a breath of wind to ruffle the tarn, we will, if you please, take our luncheon. I will guide you to a spot, with which I am sure you will be pleased, and with which I have a pleasant association.

AMICUS. This is, indeed, a pleasant spot. Here we can rest on the soft-flowering heather, drink from the living water falling into the rock-basin, and should we be disposed to sleep, be lulled by the sound, little more than a tinckle of the trickling stream. But what of the association you revert to, evidently with so much pleasure?

PISCATOR. It was not an ordinary incident of an angler's life, at least not of mine, inasmuch as the association was that of a charming, blooming girl, now a happy wife and mother,—who after a long forenoon's wanderings with me

from tarn to tarn, over the hills, here sat down with me, as we are about to do, to an angler's meal, and after refreshment, poured out some wild snatches of song, which, as I now think of them, bring to my mind the lady in Comus, or rather, I should say, the effect of her voice. Now, do not think me romantic. Had you heard my young friend — would that she were here now, and as young — I am sure you would absolve me, she had so rare a charm of voice, and power of music.

AMICUS. It was indeed a pleasant incident, and might not be so rare (excepting the vocal part) did a little more confidence exist between the sexes, and were the world less fastidious and censorious.

PISCATOR. Anglers and old anglers like us, may well adopt the knightly motto, *Honni soit qui mal y pense*. There is a little addition, which I may make, and which will amuse you, and I give it as somewhat marking the primitive subjection of the sex in these parts. My young friend, in her activity and love of scenery, had ascended high up Langdale Pike, when I was fishing in Stickle tarn, below : on descending, not seeing me, and seeing two men, natives,

fishing with the lath—that poaching implement—she addressed herself to them for information—asking “If they had seen a gentleman angling, and could direct her to him.” Oh! they replied, “your master is yonder, hid by that big rock.” And she was soon by my side, laughing, and making me smile at this strange mistake, and I may surely say, no common compliment. See, the water is beginning to move; a breeze is springing up, and let us be moving. Though I have little hope of much success, we will try; you take one side of the tarn, I will follow the other. I would recommend you to try brown flies, or woodcock’s speckled wing, with hare’s ear dubbing; brown flies, some speckled, some light brown, abound amongst the heather and bracken.

AMICUS. We have soon made the circuit of this little tarn. What have you done? I have taken one trout only,—an ill-fed one, of about half a pound, the only fish I rose.

PISCATOR. I have not had a rise; nor have I seen a fish rise. The wind is so light and unsteady, that it is not worth our while to stop. We will descend, if you please, to Easedale Tarn, and try it. There perhaps we may be

more successful; I wish I could dispense with the *perhaps*, an odious word, but too applicable to tarn-fishing, in which the chances always are against success, so much so, that I would give it up entirely, were it not for the sake of the mountain air and the mountain scenery.

AMICUS. I admire these mountain tarns, in their naked beauty. These I infer are good examples of the whole,—Easedale of the larger class, Coodle Tarn of the smaller. Nakedness, the almost total absence of trees, verdant slopes, and rugged rocks, seem to be their characteristics. The vast quantity of rain that falls amongst these woodless mountains, without which I have heard you say your lakes and tarns would be in danger of becoming horrid chasms, confirm an idea I have long formed, that too much stress has been laid by meteorologists on the presence of wood, as the promoter of rain. Do you suppose these tarns like the *Speculum Dianæ* and most of the smaller Italian lakes, to be of volcanic origin, and their basins the craters of extinct volcanoes?

PISCATOR. The features you have mentioned, are the common ones of our tarns, and these, you see, are fair specimens of the whole.

There is one adjoining which I should like you to see, for the sake of the grand façade of rock that rises from its shore. I speak of that one already mentioned, Stickle Tarn, at the head of Langdale, and at the foot of the Pikes. As to the question of the formation of these tarns, I am not aware there is any proof of their having been volcanic, at least craters of volcanoes, there being no traces of volcanic ejecta anywhere known in the district. Moreover, their forms, mostly very irregular, or, in the instance of the larger ones and of all the lakes, more or less elongated, rather favour the idea of their hollows being rents or chasms, and these formed contemporaneously with the mountains.

AMICUS. Why such a nakedness of wood? Is it owing to elevation, or to peculiarity of soil and climate.

PISCATOR. The cause here is, I believe, the same as in the wilder parts of Ireland, Donegal, Connemara, and Kerry, — the want of protection from cattle, and especially from sheep. The treeless fells, remember, are unenclosed. Wherever in this district enclosures are made and planted, the result is successful. Even here at Coodle Tarn, you see there is one tree,

a mountain ash of tolerable size, growing out of a steep bank and overhanging the water, so situated as to be free from depredation; and often in the higher fells, in cutting for peat, buried trees, the remains of old forests, are exposed, and these of no inconsiderable size. In this instance, as in so many others, do we not see an adaptation of circumstances to prevailing wants! Pasture is the great want of sheep; and here, where the land, the fells are given up to them, the close cropping of the herbage, as well as their droppings, favour the growth of the grasses they like best, and are best fitted for them.

AMICUS. Whence the name Tarn? Is it not peculiar to the Lake District?

PISCATOR. I am not an etymologist, and may not be able to satisfy you. I have heard it derived from Taarne, the Danish for tears, implying, as it were, that these collections of water we call tarns are fed and supported by the drops of water from the rocks.

AMICUS. If not true, the derivation is at least poetical, or rather, I should say, fanciful; genuine poetry, in strictness, never being severed from truth. Our great poet had for his motto—

it was a family one—"Veritas." And may not that word have had an influence on his mind, and through his mind on his writings, so distinguished for truthfulness?

PISCATOR. I agree with you that the highest poetry is the most truthful, and also that the poet's motto might have had some faint influence, as well as his name, on the poet's muse. You will see, as I think, a happy use of this motto in the new church at Ambleside, where, inscribed on the three memorial windows placed there to the poet and his dearest female relations, it serves as a connecting link; and let me tell you, that these windows denote equally near and remote respect for and admiration of the poet's worth and genius, the subscription that paid for them having been made principally in the immediate neighbourhood amongst the friends of the deceased, and across the Atlantic, in the United States amongst those who knew him chiefly through his writings, at the invitation of a man who revered the poet, and was worthy of his friendship, the late Professor Henry Reed. You may remember his fate,—how, like Milton's friend, so eloquently bewailed in *Lysidas*, he

perished by shipwreck, returning from this country,—his first visit, as well as his last, May he, too, not be

“Without the meed of some melodious tear.”

Now let us descend, and be careful, for our descent will be by a shorter way than our ascent, of greater steepness, and not without risk, where the rocks are rugged, and so nearly precipitous, that a false step might cost you your life.

AMICUS. Besides trout, are there any other fish in the tarn we have just left, and in that we are descending upon? From their situation, bounded by such lofty heights, I infer they are deep; and as deep water is favourable to the charr, am I right in supposing that there are charr in them?

PISCATOR. They may have been once deep, but at present they are not remarkably so; there is hardly a winter that they are not frozen over. Judging from the debris on the skirting hill sides, there must be a vast accumulation of the same in their beds. As to the fish in them, in Coodle Tarn I believe there is only one kind, the trout: in Easedale Tarn

there are perch as well as trout, and I hope now some charr, for only last summer I introduced a few, some hatched in my own room.

AMICUS. Considering the delicacy of this fish in its habits and its rareness, I am surprised to hear you speak thus of their hatching. Pray, how was it accomplished?

PISCATOR. Wait a minute till we have descended this steep, almost a precipice, and have got safely on the green slopes below. Do not miss that transverse projection of rock, bearing marks in its wear how long it has been trodden by the foot of man, an impress lost in the ever growing turf,—a circumstance this which may well be matter of reflection.

AMICUS. Now we are over the perilous part, and on the soft and pleasant turf, tell me of the breeding process.

PISCATOR. It is remarkable for its facility. The ova, taken from a live charr when quite mature (it was on the 25th of November), were mixed at the instant of expulsion with milt also from a living fish equally mature; and then distributed, some in shallow earthen pans with or without gravel, and some in finger-glasses, and covered with water to the depth of

three or four inches. The vessels thus charged were placed in a room, where there was commonly a fire by day, the temperature rarely falling below 50°, or rising above 55°. The water—pure spring water—was changed twice a day. Such were the circumstances. In due time, without any further trouble, no more than when seeds are sown in a pot and watered, the eggs were hatched, the young produced, varying in time from forty-four to sixty-six days. For about six weeks, the only attention the fry required was a daily change of water; so long they needed no food, subsisting, as in the instance of the young salmon and trout in the same stage of growth, on the attached residual yolk,—that yolk from which they had been originally developed and organised. When the whole of the yolk was absorbed, and they required other food, and were so advanced in form and power as to be able to seek it, then I brought them here.

AMICUS. Would it not have been better to have kept them some time longer, till of a less tender age, and better capable of avoiding their many enemies?

PISCATOR. My means were not adequate.

Such trials as I made to keep some longer were unsuccessful, whether owing to not giving them proper food, or not affording them a sufficient supply of fresh and cold water. Remember they are not, in this early stage, so helpless as at first might be imagined: they are quick in their movements; this and their minuteness of size, and their tendency to nestle under stones, tolerably secure them. Let me advise you, whenever you have an opportunity, to engage in the breeding of any of the Salmonidæ of which you can procure the ova and the milt, whether of the trout, salmon, or charr (the facilities in each instance are much the same), not to lose it. You will find the subject interesting, especially if you call in aid the microscope; then, you may witness the progressive formation of a living being in all its complicated organisation, from its crude elements comprised in the substance of the egg,—to compare delicate things with coarse—nature's work with man's—like the building up of a house, or the construction of a ship; you may watch the changes, the metamorphoses in their course; you may see demonstrated in the transparent structure of the

embryo, the marvellous circulation of the blood, its double course through the gills, corresponding to the lungs, and through the body, from the mere impulse of the ever-acting heart; with other particulars, of a curious kind, which you may well imagine. Now we are at the margin of the lake, let us follow the same plan as at Coodle Tarn; you go in one direction, I in the other. The fresh breeze that has sprung up is in our favour. As we part where the rivulet enters, I think we may calculate on meeting where, in a somewhat fuller stream, the out-flowing one starts on its downward journey.

AMICUS. We have met as you calculated; and unless you have had much better sport than I can boast of, I infer, as it is getting late, you will not be disposed to make another circuit. I have taken only three fish,—trouts of herring size.

PISCATOR. And I have taken only twice that number, and the largest little larger than yours; but they are well fed, and will appear to advantage, if you compare them with any we may take in our descent; and it may be

worth while to try the beck, were it merely for the sake of comparison.

AMICUS. This "beck," as you call the rivulet, is in its broken rapid course a good example of the mountain stream; and what a fine fall is this we are just come to; the volume of water, white in foam, making one clear leap over the black rock into the deep ruffled pool below.

PISCATOR. That is Sour-milk-gill; and in that pool between two no inconsiderable falls,—in that dubb, as such a pool is here called,—where you would least expect to find a fish, you will, if you make a cast, probably get a rise, and hook one.

AMICUS. See, I have one! and how dark and ill formed; how large its head, how lank its body, and how shattered its tail-fin. Poor fish! what a specimen of the half starved and tempest-tossed. I infer by mishap it has come down the cataract and got imprisoned. And lo! now I have opened it, though this is July; there are a few ova of full size loose within.

PISCATOR. The fact is worthy of note, and pray make a note of it; see, they are transparent, and without any marks of development.

AMICUS. "Sour-milk-gill," — what a significant name!

PISCATOR. Our Northern dialect is rich in descriptive and distinctive names. Mere, tarn, beck, gill, force, dubb, are words expressive of different varieties of water. Almost, indeed I may say every natural object here has a name, and commonly an expressive, and often a picturesque one. That bold headland is Helm-crag; that connecting ridge, Lancrigg; the opening gently descending dale, Easedale; the higher dale, Far-Easedale; that pretty knoll far down in the dale, crowned with wood with grassy slopes, is Butterlip-How; then, not far off, some of them in sight, are Silver-How, Fairfield, the Pikes, Wry-nose, Hard-knott, the Great Gable, and others, more than I can remember. This richness of names marks well the old country, and the breed of its people, — names to me more pleasing than those, rarely found here, of castellated holds and baronial residences.

AMICUS. I like your predilection. How different the associations, and how well adapted for the poetry of nature!

PISCATOR. And Nature's Poet has made

good use of them. There is a good example in Wordsworth's Poems on the naming of places, in that entitled Joanna. I will task my memory to repeat some of the resounding lines:—

— “ When I had gazed perhaps two minutes' space,
Joanna, looking in my eyes, beheld
That ravishment of mine, and laughed aloud.
The rock, like something starting from a sleep,
Took up the Lady's voice and laughed again ;
That ancient Woman seated on Helm-crag,
Was ready with her cavern ; Hammar-Scar,
And the tall steep of Silver-How, sent forth
A noise of laughter ; southern Loughrigg heard,
And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone :
Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky,
Carried the Lady's voice ; old Skiddaw blew
His speaking-trumpet ; — back out of the clouds
Of Glaramara southward came the voice ;
And Kirkstone tossed it from his misty head.”

And besides their poetical use, let me tell you, they have another, an historical one,—they are, as it were, the records of the early times of the district and of its inhabitants, of which for proof let me recommend to you for perusal a little work containing a good deal of research, lately published, entitled “The Northmen in Cumberland and Westmoreland,” the author of which, as you may infer from the

title, considers those hardy independent races, especially the Norwegians, as the original of the existing population. Alluding to the practice of the Northmen, of giving the name of the departed chief not only in the mound (*How*) in which he was buried, but also in many cases to the valley or plain in which it was situated, he remarks,—and I repeat his words now, because so applicable,—“Upon many of the lower heights which encircle our beautiful lakes, the Viking has reared his tomb—from the summit of Silver-How, an old chieftain looks down upon the lowly grave of Wordsworth; and the tourist, as he climbs upon Butterlip-How, a favourite site for the survey of the lovely plain of Grasmere, treads over the ashes of a once nimble-footed Northman. We might almost imagine, in the stillness of a summer eve, the ghosts of those grim warriors, seated each on his sepulchral hill, looking down, as was their firm belief, upon the peaceful scene below. Silver-How is derived from the proper name of Sölvar; while in Butterlip-How we find the name Buthar Lipr (pronounced, as nearly as may be, Butterlip,) Buthar the nimble.”

AMICUS. This, too, is poetical; and if worthy of any credit historically, imparts a fresh interest to those scenes, and to the district generally. I am glad to hear you say that I shall find in the book to which you refer me, weighty evidence that the hypothesis is not a fiction.

PISCATOR. Indeed you will, and not only in the names of places analogous to those in Norway, but also in the idiom of the people, their customs, bodily form, and complexion; and a goodly origin it is, of which the people may well be proud.

Now let our day's fishing end; let us make the best of our way home, where we can resume the pleasant subject; and where you can consult the book itself. Let us hope that to-morrow we may have as pleasant a day, with better sport,



COLLOQUY III.

*Santon Bridge, Cumberland. — The River Irt.
— Evening Fishing. — Varied Discussion.*

AMICUS.



OW pleasant has been our morning ride from your mountain home, under Fairfield and Scandale Pike, through the pastoral valleys of Langdale and Eskdale, and over the wild bounding hills with those singular names of Wry-nose and Hard-knott. I hardly know of what I saw which pleased me most, there was such an accordance and harmony throughout; the neat and substantial farm-house of stone, in its sheltered site, with its ornamental trees, the dark yew, the umbrageous sycamore, or stately fir, or graceful birch; the meadows, whether lying low, or on the hill sides, so well enclosed and cared for, with their beautiful pastures, won

by a toilsome industry from the marsh or mountain; and in addition, the fine finish of nature — if I may use the expression—in the rounded lower hills and hummocks, dome-like, often in a manner insulated, so advantageously contrasting with the loftier heights, the bold girding mountains. I can readily believe what you stated the other day, that glaciers have existed here. Are not the forms I have mentioned, with others, such as the terrace-shape of many of the declivities, owing to their action?

PISCATOR. It can hardly be doubted. There is not a valley in the Lake District which does not bear marks more or less of such an action: the harder rocks recently exposed are invariably found scratched and grooved in lines almost parallel; boulders are of frequent occurrence, and moved worn stones, after the manner of moraines, and enormous beds of drift are common; in brief, here on a comparatively small scale may be seen and studied all the phenomena of glacier action, — an epitome of what is to be seen on a larger scale, and in progress in the valley of the Alps.

AMICUS. What of their antiquity? Are there any data for calculating the age of the glaciers

of which we thus see, or presume we see, the effects?

PISCATOR. From the nature of the materials of which the drifts or moraines consist, the glacial period here, it may be inferred, was a recent one in geological history; and, were we authorised in coming to a conclusion, from the circumstance that nothing organic has yet been discovered in these accumulations,—no implement of art, no bones, no remains of trees,—it would be that the glacial followed the fiery period, and was anterior to the time of the country being inhabited by man, or even in a state fitting it for the support of animals or plants. But the inquiry is in its infancy: I can lay no stress on this inference.

AMICUS. We crossed two mountain streams on our way, and saw three pretty lakes or tarns; what were they?

PISCATOR. That long piece of water in Langdale, more like a river than a lake, and from which the Brathay flows, is Elter Water; the next is little Langdale Tarn, a tarn abounding in trout of herring size; and the third, at a greater elevation, is Blea Tarn, of which, in the "Excursion," you will find a

description, with its surrounding scenery, in the account of the Recluse, whose abode was in the solitary farm-house, such a one as there still is in this secluded little highland dale. The rivers we passed were the Duddon, so well known now in song, in its infant stage near its source, which we crossed at Cockley Beck, and the Esk, somewhat further from its source,—a stream, to my mind, in its purity, frequent falls and deep pools in rocky basins, not less deserving of a poet's notice,—perhaps in its beautiful wildness and accompaniments even more worthy of admiration. Nowhere does Scawfell, the highest of our mountains, appear to such advantage as from the upper valley of the Esk, with its companion Bowfell, rising grandly in their drear moorland solitude.

AMICUS. In ascending from Langdale, we had a view of a pretty water-fall. Can you tell me its name?

PISCATOR. It is Colwith-Force, the stream a tributary of the Brathay. I am glad that you have mentioned it, not that I intend to descant on its beauty, but to notice a fact relative to the Charr, which has lately come to my knowledge; namely, its ascending thus far and

through rough water, and, according to my informant, in the breeding season, and only then, and for the purpose of spawning. The person from whom I learnt this is a notorious poacher, and well acquainted with the habits of the fish. According to him, though some spawned at the foot of the fall, more preferred the lower, wider, and stiller portion of the Brathay, and still more the shoals of Windermere, for their breeding-place; thus, in such variety of locality, showing a remarkable latitude of choice for a purpose in which we suppose instinct to be so mainly concerned. You may ask, perhaps, "Am I certain of the fact?" Had the man a theory to support, or any interest, I might have my doubts of his accuracy; but, as his object was only the nefarious one of taking breeding charr, I cannot question it.

AMICUS. This village, which you tell me is called Santon Bridge, both in its situation and simple character, reminds me of our last fishing station, Bampton Grange.* Here, as there, we seem to be on the outskirts of the Lake District; and I fear too, as there, at some distance from our fishing ground.

* The Angler and his Friend, p. 232.

PISCATOR. You are right again ; we are on the boundaries of the Lake District, but much nearer the sea and at a lower level, and are leaving the pastoral region for the arable,—the sheep country for the corn country ; and the lake, where we purpose to have a day's fishing, Wastwater, is from hence somewhat more distant than Haweswater from Bampton Grange, not less than three miles ; but the river, the Irt, in which I hope we shall get some sport, is close at hand : the bridge in the village which we crossed, and which gives name to the village, is over it. Whether we have any success or not in fishing this stream, I am sure you will be pleased with it, especially that part of it flowing through the grounds of Irton Hall,—grounds hardly inferior in sylvan beauty to the banks of the Teme, in Oakley Park, and superior in another respect, in the impressive grandeur imparted by the mountains seen in the distance. Now, in the middle of July, they are without snow ; were it April or October, they would probably be crested with snow, and would have even more of an Alpine character. As the fishing here is best in the evening and the sun is yet high, we will, if you please, whilst our

dinner is getting ready, take a stroll by the river side, pay our respects to the worthy gentleman, the proprietor of the Hall, and ask his leave for our angling, which, knowing his courtesy and kindness of old, I am sure will not be refused. How well do I remember when I first asked it; it was in company, alas! with the same friend who was my companion at Bampton Grange, and this was his last fishing excursion, and a most pleasant one it was; he died a few days after his return from it,—so near often, and too often, are our pleasures and griefs, enjoyable life and the cold grave.

AMICUS. I thank you for this our walk; you spoke justly of the scenery and of its sylvan beauty. I shall not fail to advise any friend of mine coming here to go where you brought me; first, to the pretty summer-house, near the Lodge, looking down on the tumbling stream raging amongst rocks in its rapid descent, partially hid by its wooded banks, partially disclosed; and next to the terrace on which the Hall stands, flanked, especially on the left, by those noble trees, and overlooking the park-like meadows stretching down to the river, here winding quietly along, with occasional breaks,—

the delight of the angler, — those little falls and rapids giving life to its waters.

PISCATOR. It is, indeed, a spot of beauty! Would that the trees, those silver firs that you admired, could be secured from the effects of age. Did you not notice that they are showing marks of decay?

AMICUS. Do you speak of the largest trees, the domicile of the innumerable rooks?

PISCATOR. The same; and let me tell you that the rooks have the blame for their decay.

AMICUS. And do you believe it? May they not, in this instance, as in many others, do good rather than harm?

PISCATOR. Probably so. Their droppings — a kind of guano, abounding in lithic acid, a rich manure — cannot fail to fertilise the soil where they fall; it is not unlikely, indeed, that the trees owe their noble growth rather than their decay to the very birds they shelter: this, at least, is the more pleasing and grateful view of the association.

AMICUS. Pray, what were those small projecting platforms, which I saw by the margin of the stream in several places?

PISCATOR. They are deserving of attention,

being a contrivance, and I am sure you will think a poaching one, for the capture of fish. Be on your guard how you step on them, for they are of feeble structure, and will not always support the weight of a man, especially one part, an opening, which is only lightly covered. They are here called "hods," and are made of wicker-work, sticks thrust into the overhanging bank, and crossed with others, and covered with turf. Their intent is to produce deep shade, a tempting resting place during the day for the larger fish, which, as I before mentioned, when speaking of the evening angling, shun the garish light. There is, I know, one close by. Ha! I see the landlord is going to the garden with a lister, that three-pronged spear in his hand. Let us follow him; I dare say he is about to look into his hod, with the hope of getting a fish in part for his supper fare and in part for our dinner.

AMICUS. You were right. What a strange proceeding. He throws himself down with his face to the earth over the hod!

PISCATOR. See, he removes some dried ferns, and now through the opening he has made, he looks into the water. Now he clutches his spear, and carefully introduces it without rais-

ing his head. Be sure there is a fish there. He strikes, and with effect! Behold the prize, "a mort," of at least three pounds, — a fresh-run fish, and in excellent condition.

AMICUS. A most easy and rude way this of fishing, and well deserving the name of poaching: yet, truly on the part of the man, it is a prostration with profitable effect! If there be many of these hods, and they are well attended to, the angling cannot be good.

PISCATOR. Indeed they are too many, every small proprietor having one or more, spoiling the river for fair angling, except shortly after a fresh, such as that which the late heavy rains have produced, and which has tempted me to bring you here, when at this season we may be pretty sure that a good many fish have run up from the sea; and now that the water is clearing, we may have a tolerable chance of success.— "Landlord, I know you intend a portion of this fish to be on the table at our dinner. Let it, if you please, be the tail portion: and do tell your good woman, who is not above taking and remembering a hint from an old and travelled angler, to boil it, and in the manner I described to her when I was last here."

AMICUS. Favour me with your cooking process, as skill in dressing a fish I hold to be a proper accompaniment of the skill of catching it; and, according to my reading, most accomplished anglers seem to pride themselves in possessing it.

PISCATOR. Is not this another of the advantages attending angling; I mean its promoting an art so low as that of cooking in this country, and so little cultivated in its refinements? As to this process, it is a simple one, and well known to our craft. It is simply this: to make the water boil before putting in the fish, and that the temperature, the boiling point may be higher, throwing into the kettle a handful of salt. In ten or fifteen minutes such a piece of fish as we are to have, of about a pound and a half, will be thoroughly dressed, will be firm and flaky, with the curd preserved and bloodless,—the last-mentioned quality the proof of its being sufficiently done.

PISCATOR. I hope this evening fishing has not disappointed you, and that your success has been at least equal to mine, which has

not been great, having killed only two morts, the largest not exceeding three pounds, one "spod" of about ten ounces, and a few small river trout.

AMICUS. My success has been less; one large fish, of the kind you call a "mort" I infer (would that it were *mort*) I hooked and lost from its getting entangled in weeds; and the trouts I have taken, about a dozen, were hardly worth taking, they were so small. Notwithstanding, I have had no small enjoyment in my ramble by the river-side this fine evening after the heat of the day. At this time, by such a stream and amidst such scenery, angling is indeed "the contemplative man's recreation," and something more; may we not say, that the river-side is the contemplative man's study. How glorious were the mountain peaks rising above the dark wood, reflecting the lingering light of day! How pleasant, almost musical in the silence of the late evening, the sound of the falling water and of the rippling stream! How refreshing the cool air! I felt grateful for so much enjoyment. — My thoughts at times, heightening perhaps the enjoyment, reverted to other scenes, in other countries less favoured

by nature, to the hot south, and hotter tropics, where exercise is a toil, the “*far niente*” a pleasure, and where even the pleasure of rest is broken in upon by the pest of insects. Thinking of such distant scenes, I thought how thankful we Englishmen should be for such a land as ours, and such a climate!

PISCATOR. Yours was a pleasant train of thought! How much, indeed, do we owe to our climate! Perhaps even our rational freedom, our best institutions. Were it different, were it either like that of Northern Russia, or of Southern Naples or Sicily, should we have preserved the sustained vigour that marks our race, and which is as remarkable in the races of our domestic animals,—a vigour to which we owe so much?

AMICUS. In my pensive mood by the river side, I remembered me of a former remark of yours, how angling affords an opportunity, hardly to be enjoyed otherwise, to become acquainted with the habits of the people, and began to reflect on the contrast that is so marked between the natives of this district and of any part of Ireland which I have yet visited. How different their manners, how different

their dress, how different their dwellings! An incident shortly before probably conduced to the train of thought. It was the assistance given me by a working man, an angler, who seeing my flies entangled in a tree, out of my reach, without being asked, mounted into the tree, cut off the branch without saying a word, or more than a word, and taking, without thanking me, a few flies I gave him, with thanks for his trouble.

PISCATOR. There is good and bad in both, and perhaps tolerably balanced. Steadiness here is commonly associated with a repulsive silent gravity; levity there with an agreeable conversational sprightliness; neatness and propriety of dress here with thrift and parsimony; raggedness and little attention to dress there with less regard to saving and lucre, and more devotion to the kindly feelings. Here bastardy is common; there it is most uncommon; prudence, in one instance, checking early marriages; early marriages, in the other, fostering female virtue, and that virtue enhancing respect for the sex. But I am running into a parallel, tempted by the subject, which, pray, excuse.

AMICUS. There are puzzling features in both people: as mountaineers, from what I have heard and seen of those of this country, they are nowise an impulsive or imaginative people, are poor in traditionary lore, little tainted with superstition, and not remarkable for religious feeling. The Lake-poets, I believe, were not of the district; respected in their adopted country, as they all were, it was, I am assured, rather as men than as poets. You will smile at what I am about to mention,—and perhaps with better knowledge may question its truth,—how a farmer's wife, a shrewd woman in her way, when one of these distinguished men was taken to his last home,—on the family of the deceased poet becoming the subject of conversation,—naively remarked, she supposed Mrs. ——, the widow, “would carry on the business.” Such was her view of the divine art.

PISCATOR. There is a consistency in character. How the character of a people is formed is commonly a difficult problem to solve. Its formation seems to depend on a variety of circumstances, something probably on race, a good deal *ab initio* on climate and

soil and geographical position; these most commonly determining the prevailing occupations, and the occupations having their influence in the formation of habits and modes of thought. Not an imaginative people, any more than the Danes, those of this district are a calculating people. I was assured by an eminent man, a native, himself a distinguished mathematician and astronomer, and who had received his school education in one of the villages of the district, Hawkshead, that that school had sent to Cambridge in his recollection, then extending to fifty years, no fewer than twelve senior wranglers.

AMICUS. When we visited that neat and pretty village the other day, you pointed out the school-room; you pointed out the Dame's house where our great Poet nestled when a boy, and the yew tree by the road side, an early subject of his muse,—of those “lines,” as they are called, which contain the germ of his after writings, and are almost equal to anything he ever wrote, but you said nothing of the glories of the school.

PISCATOR. Alas! they are passed away. A school, which, when at its height, little more

than half a century ago, had at one time more than 100 boys within its walls, many of them in preparation for our universities, has not, I believe, now one fifth of that number, and most of this small number are instructed, it is said, only in the merest rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic. The causes of the decline I will not enter upon; it is nowise a pleasant subject, and I regret to think it is not a solitary example: too many of the endowed schools of the district, which in their time have done good service, have fallen off in like manner. Would that the government would look to them; and in originating new not forget the old; nor let their endowments make them independent and exempt from all supervision and correcting control. — How we have strayed from what we began conversing about! Pray, if you can, put the broken thread into my hand.

AMICUS. I was telling you of the pleasure I had in the late evening: it was I that digressed, nor do I regret it, from fishing into a higher though not pleasanter subject of talk.

PISCATOR. I remember; and pray remember that I forewarned you of this tendency, when

speaking of the social privileges of anglers. As regards evening fishing, I agree with you as to its enjoyments, provided it be not extended into the night, nor followed longer than it is agreeable; if longer, then I think we must call it poaching. Dark-fishing, that is, when you cannot see your flies, and are guided by the ear and not by the eye, is truly a deed of darkness;—being a killing time, the larger fish then on the alert foraging, it is a favourite time of the poacher. If an exception is to be made in favour of night-fishing, it is, I think, in the north, and in the height of summer, when the late and early twilight meet. Then and there, it certainly has its charms; and I would advise the young angler,—that is, the man young in years,—to try it occasionally. Apart from the sport, there is an enjoyment of another kind, arising out of the peculiarities of the hour,—the mysterious light, the solemn stillness, the profound solitude,—the sleep of nature. Even now, after the lapse of so many years, I have fresh in memory the feelings produced at such a time, when a student youth fishing in the romantic grounds of Craigy Hall, near Edin-

burgh, amongst the rocks under that picturesque wide-spanning arch, the *utile dulci* bridge, so inscribed, and so fittingly.

AMICUS. As a traveller I know well the feeling to which you refer and its solemnity, and could wish myself younger to have the enjoyment as an angler unchecked by thoughts of risk of health, and other prudential considerations.—Now to return to our fish;—pray, what is the fish which is here called a Mort, and what that called a Spod?

PISCATOR, The terms, I need not tell you, are provincial. Here, I believe, they are indiscriminately applied to the white trout or sea trout and to the salmon on its first advent from the sea. The distinction between morts and spods rests chiefly on size; the former of larger size, commonly from a pound and a half to four pounds and a half,—the latter, smaller, from ten ounces to a pound and a half.

AMICUS. Provincial as the terms are, they sound oddly. What is their derivation and meaning, if they have any? If there be truth in the Northmen original of the people, ought we not to find that these terms have a Norwegian root?

PISCATOR. They are as local as they are provincial; but whence derived is somewhat uncertain. Perhaps *mort* may be from old Norse, *murta*; Danish, *murt*; Suiv-Gothic, *mōrt* *at* trout; and *spod*, from the Danish, *spœd*, signifying tender, delicate. I am indebted for these derivations, conjectural as they are, to the author of the work of which we were speaking; and they are as plausible as the derivations of many others in common use, especially the names of fishes.

AMICUS. That I had not thought of. Pray are the words by which the *Salmonidæ* are now known, such as you speak of, so obscure and unintelligible as regards their signification?

PISCATOR. I fear I must answer in the affirmative. Let us go over them, beginning with the generic name *Salmo*. You will smile when I say it is a question whether the word is derived from a river, the Sale, a branch of the Elbe, frequented by the fish, or from *sal*, salt, it having been chiefly known to the Romans, and in the market of Rome as a salted fish. Pliny, I believe, is the earliest author in which mention is made of it, and that very briefly and not very correctly, seemingly

ignorant of its migratory habits. The passage is this:—" *In Aquitania salmo fluviatilis marinis omnibus præfertur.*"

AMICUS. Were not the Greeks acquainted with it, and does not the searching Aristotle make mention of it?

PISCATOR. Remember it is a fish of cold waters, and that it is unknown in the Mediterranean and in all the rivers emptying themselves into that sea, as well as into its branches, the Ægean and the Euxine, and you are answered. Even the trout, it would appear, had not the attention of Aristotle, though it might have come under his notice, occurring as it does in some of the rivers of ancient Macedonia.

AMICUS. What of *its* name? I hope you can say something satisfactory concerning it.

PISCATOR. I wish I could; judge for yourself, when I tell you that some naturalists have given it up in despair, that some have referred it to the base Latin of the middle ages, after this manner, Trout, *Trutta*; *Trocta*, τροκτης, vorator; others to the German, Trutt, signifying that which is pleasing, an object of desire; a derivation, I think you will agree with me, we may at least highly approve of as anglers.

AMICUS. Good! I quite approve. What have you to say of the specific names of *Ferox*, *Salar*, *Erox*, *Umbla*?

PISCATOR. You impose on me a hard task. To begin with the last on your list, the charr,—*S. umbla*, the *umbra* probably of Ausonius,—may owe its name, it has been conjectured with some plausibility, to its colour and shyness,—seen as a shadow, obscurely seen in the water. Of the first, *S. ferox*, a name recently given, the explanation is obvious; the size of the fish, its strength and voracity, its formidable teeth, have well earned it this its appellation, that is, if it be truly a distinct species, and not the common trout, the growth of many years, coarsely and abundantly fed. The word *Salar* applied to the chief of the Salmonidæ, the noble salmon, labours under the same obscurity as the generic name, and may be held to be a synonyme. Of *eriox* and *fario*, I can offer nothing satisfactory, even less so than of the provincial terms, Mort and Spod, with which we started our conversation;—perhaps these also were originally provincial names, and might have been used with as little accuracy. There is a verse or two of Ausonius which may be

mentioned in point, applicable to one of them.

“Teque inter geminas species neutrumque et utrumque,
Qui necdum salmo, nec jam salar, ambiguusque
Amborum, medio Fario intercepte sub ævo.”

Now as Ausonius was a native of Gaul, of Bordeaux, he might have had an opportunity of becoming familiar with the names as applied to the salmon provincially used, and the fishermen of the Garonne might have made as many distinctions (which his words imply) as some of ours do at present, or till very recently: take the Ribble, for instance. Willughby informs us, in his *Historia Piscium*, that the fishermen of that river applied to the salmon no less than six different names, according to the age of the fish; calling those of one year, smelts, those of the second, sprods, of the third, morts, of the fourth, fork-tails, of the fifth, half-fish, and of the sixth, lastly, when presumed to be of full size, and not till then, salmon. And, in Connemara, I have heard nearly as many distinctive names used, founded on a like supposition as to age; thus they call there the young fish, before descending to the sea, *fry* (salmon-fry), on their first return, *peel*, on their

next, that is, in the following year, *forked-tails*, and not till the year after, *salmon*.

AMICUS. Great, indeed, is the obscurity: the subject of the names, the specific ones, from what you say, I presume is an almost hopeless one; fortunately, it is of little importance.

PISCATOR. Excepting in connexion with facts. The subject is unquestionably obscure in itself, but that is not a reason it should be given up in despair. The provincial names we have been speaking of, I have no doubt have been assigned with little care, and may be, many of them, incorrect, whilst given to distinguish ages confounding species, or *vice versâ*, as in the well known instances of the parr and smolt. Let us hope, as in these instances, the exact researches of the naturalist will make clear what is uncertain and obscure.

AMICUS. You have made mention of Pliny and Aristotle; since I have become addicted to angling, I have at spare hours been consulting these authors, those main authorities in the ancient world on natural history, relative to fishes, but I cannot say with adequate return for the trouble of turning over the pages. The Roman seems to be the echo of the Greek, and

not unfrequently a broken and confused one. In Aristotle I find a great quantity of information, indicating extraordinary acuteness on his part as an observer, and uncommon industry and perseverance; but as regards its communication, expressed too often so generally as to be of little avail.

PISCATOR. His history of animals is a remarkable treatise; and in considering it, we should remember the time when it was written, and the plan of the work, — how, it may be presumed, the author had little help from the writings of others, was chiefly dependent on his own observations; and how he undertook not to enter on the history of animals in detail, — that boundless expanse of created living things, — but merely to give a general sketch of the more remarkable families.

AMICUS. What you say may be just; I will not question it; or that Aristotle was the father of Natural History, and that we are under great obligations to him; but surely, it was unfortunate that so great a master, who became so great an authority, should have adopted such a method.

PISCATOR. Let us think of him in his ex

cellences rather than in his defects. Generalization is the characteristic of an early period and of an infant stage of science, as well as of impatient intellect and of daring genius. The inductive method, the strictly natural history method, belongs to a more advanced period and stage of knowledge, when the attention is given more to differences than to resemblances. Had Bacon lived at the time of Aristotle, he probably would not have proposed a scheme for inquiry like that detailed in his *Novum Organum*. The defects of the old plan, long worked on, and so unprofitably, may well have led to the new one. When you say you have turned over the pages of Aristotle with little profit, you are, I think, hardly just. Remember that, though he deals much in general propositions, he commonly enforces them by examples, and often gives striking instances of the minuteness as well as accuracy of his observations. How well he describes the eyes of the mole which, even now, is considered by the vulgar to be blind and without eyes. How correctly he describes the peculiarities of the cuckoo, separating the fabulous from the true, which in recent times

were hardly believed till confirmed by Jenner. How curious are his observations on the manner of breeding of fish of the cartilaginous family ! How well selected the circumstances which he adduces in presumptive evidence that fish hear, and smell, and sleep ; I say presumptive, because I do not hold them to be conclusive. I agree with you in your opinion respecting the Roman, as very inferior to his great precursor and original ; but even from his pages, some knowledge may be gleaned.

AMICUS. I stand rebuked for the hasty opinion I first offered, — that, respecting the Stagyrte, and thank you for what you have said. I see my mistake ; I overlooked the vast chasm of centuries between the early and advanced stage of natural science, and inconsiderately expected in the one what could only be attained in the other. When I next refer to Aristotle, it will be with due respect, and in search of particulars,—his miscellaneous observations.

PISCATOR. Pray do so. You will find it a warehouse in which there are many rare and valuable articles, as well as many crude and imperfect ones. To read either with benefit —

Aristotle or Pliny—we must use our own light, that which modern science affords.

AMICUS. As, for instance, when the former states that the eel is of no sex; that it has not its origin from an egg, but is of spontaneous evolution from mud aided by rain; or, when the latter adduces, under the proposition, *quædam gignuntur ex non genitis*, that the eel is produced from filaments detached from the surface of an old eel, by the rubbing itself against a rock in the sea, — the filaments thus abraded becoming young eels.

PISCATOR. The instance you give is a glaring one. But remember, it is only very recently that the true mode of the production of the eel has been ascertained. I can recollect when as loose ideas nearly as those of Aristotle and Pliny were entertained respecting this then mysterious fish, and by naturalists and physiologists of eminence. One advantage afforded by consulting such works as those we are speaking of, belonging to the remote past, is that they bring strongly before us the state and quality of knowledge of the times in which they were written; and are doubly instructive, as not only

showing the amount of that knowledge, but also the methods employed in obtaining it and in reasoning upon it. Comparing modern science with ancient, as portrayed by these authors, what strikes us more forcibly than the silence on all instrumental helps and demonstrated experiments! Instruments the arms of science, and more than the arms, even the eyes, by which her great conquests have been made, are of modern times, and how comparatively recent! The ancients used only their unaided senses,—increasing the more our admiration of what they accomplished.

AMICUS. You mentioned the cuckoo and the knowledge of its peculiarities, I presume, in breeding, as an example of Aristotle's accuracy of observation, and how for a time doubted, confirmed by our illustrious countryman Jenner. Pray, where is his account of the bird to be found?

PISCATOR. You will find it in the *Philosophical Transactions* for 1788. Do read it. It is most curious and interesting in its details, and an admirable example of the modern method of inquiry compared with the ancient. After reading it, you will not feel surprised

that its author (then a young man, and it was his first paper) should have become the discoverer of that which has immortalised his name.

Our conversation has brought us, as it has so often done before, and I hope often will again, late into the night. Now let us to our beds. We shall find them all that anglers need, neat and clean, though perhaps too soft, and our bed-room (a double-bedded one, with which we must put up), like this little sitting-room, a pattern of its kind.



COLLOQUY IV.

Wasdale Head. — Wastwater. — Lake-fishing.

AMICUS.



O this is Wasdale Head, which I have so long desired to see. How grand are these mountain forms by which it is surrounded! How charming the little pastoral region which they inclose; a farm house here, a farm house there, and there the humblest of churches distinguishable only by its primitive and characteristic belfrey; a single arch supporting its single bell. Pray, what are the names of those majestic heights?

PISCATOR. That in front of us is the Great Gable, that on the right Great End, a shoulder of Scawfell; that nearer the lake and less bold, Lingwell; on the other side are Blacksail, Kirkfell, and Yewbarrow; and that deep and gloomy

hollow, from which the pretty stream breaks out, the principal feeder of the lake, is Morsdale Bottom. We are fortunate in our weather and season : never have I seen this mountain valley look more charming ; the clouds partially hiding the mountain tops ; the breaks of sunshine here and there — those smiles of nature ; the bright light green of the new mowed meadows contrasted, where nearest to the lake, with the dark hue of its surface ; and how much more not to be described. But let us hasten to the farm house, and get some refreshment ; we are yet in time for a little evening fishing. I have engaged a boat ; and I am assured, if the wind do not fail us, we may have a good chance of taking some nice trout, and perhaps a charr. Trout and charr are the principal fish as constant residents, besides which there are perch and the migratory ones, the salmon, morts, and spod ; but these latter are rarely taken with the fly : nor, must I omit another, the *botling*, the history of which is somewhat obscure.

AMICUS. This farm house is quite worthy of the place, and I may say the same of our kind hostess. Did you ever see more cleanliness, neatness, and order ! The little flower garden

in front, with its trimmed shrubs; the pretty entrance porch; and here within, the flagged floors of sandstone, freshened with ochre; the black oaken polished staircase; the clean, carpeted bed-rooms,—all in such keeping.

PISCATOR. This is a fair specimen of a Dale farm house. All here are alike; and altogether, I am told, there are only seven; and those belonging to so many farms; the little chapel in accordance, its side walls under six feet in height, enclosing eight pews, one for each family, with the parson's. It is a curiosity of its kind; that is, in its smallness; in other respects, differing but little from the churches of the district generally. You noticed its belfrey, perched on its western gable; I dare say the bell may often be heard sounding in the dead of night, when the wind is high—for it hangs, you may perceive, unsheltered.

AMICUS. I have enjoyed our tea, with such good cream, bread and butter. I did not expect to fare so well.

PISCATOR. Here where there is no inn or public house, the farmers are in the habit of receiving casual tourists. The care of them is left to their wives, and some provision is commonly

made to supply their wants—for which we may well be grateful,—though of course it is for their profit. Now let us be off for the lake.

AMICUS. Inform me, if you please, as we go, about the lake,—this Wastwater—a dreary name, if “*wast*” signifies as I infer waste,—its aspect is so dark and gloomy.

PISCATOR. Certainly; and it may owe this its name to the colour of its shore, which you may perceive is composed chiefly of dark rock and shingle, to the depth of its water, and the shade, and that especially of the mountain ridge which rises so abruptly from its southern side. The lake you see conforms in shape to the majority of those of the larger size belonging to the district, its length greatly exceeding its width; the one about three miles and a half, the other about half a mile where widest. In depth, it is hardly second to any: it was sounded, I have been told, in different places by an accurate observer, Colonel Mudge of the Royal Engineers, in 1818 and 1826; and found, where deepest, to be 47 fathoms or 282 feet. Owing to this, its depth, it is somewhat paradoxical in its qualities. It is reported never to freeze, and yet to be very cold. That it never freezes

— has never been frozen—is not correct: last winter, that of 1854-5, an unusually severe one, it was in part frozen; on its lower end there was ice, I was told, at least an inch thick; and seventeen years previously, I was assured by the same person, an eye-witness, that it was also in part covered with ice. As to its temperature, it is not surprising that it should be considered cold, being the subject of remark chiefly in summer, when, like springs from a certain depth, its temperature is low, approaching nearer the mean annual one than shallower waters which are more readily affected by atmospheric influences. Owing to this peculiarity, the early fishing is not good; nor are the fish, it is said, early in condition. July is esteemed the best month here for angling. Another singularity of this lake anglers should be aware of is, its being subject to sudden and violent squalls, and these from the south, whence, perhaps, you would least expect them in that direction, being sheltered by the Screes.

AMICUS. The Screes! pray what are they, or it?

PISCATOR. The mountain ridge, the southern boundary of the lake is known by this name.

It is a peculiar feature of the scenery; is almost everywhere inaccessible; and this, whether in its scarped portion, consisting of loose, shifting debris, like a volcanic mountain, or in its perpendicular and rent precipices. The name is, I believe, provincial; but whence derived, I am ignorant, or what its exact meaning. Perhaps it may be the synonyme of scratch, implying the worn, naked, and torn aspect of the mountain side.

AMICUS. Indulge my curiosity about the Botling. I have heard of the fish, thus called, before, as peculiar to Wastwater, and as seldom taken, except in the fall of the year, and then, when running up the stream with the intent of spawning. Do you consider it a distinct species of the Salmonidæ?

PISCATOR. I can speak of the Botling only from what I have heard concerning it, for I have never seen it. I owe all I know of it chiefly to one of the statesmen of the place, himself an angler, and whose house is the chief resort of tourists, — that which we first passed, and found so crowded that we were obliged to go to the next. According to him, the Botling is always a male; he describes it as

a powerful fish, differing chiefly from the common trout in its greater size, greater thickness, and the marked manner in which its under jaw is turned up and hooked. It varies in weight from four pounds to twelve pounds; one of the latter weight, which he killed with the lister, he found, on measuring, so thick, that its girth exceeded its length by four inches. In colouring and marking, he said, it also resembled the ordinary lake trout, the brown spots on its back being only proportionally larger.

AMICUS. Is it a monster lake trout that has had the good fortune to escape capture, till it has attained this, its goodly size? or is it a *Salmo-ferox*?

PISCATOR. I am disposed to consider it the first, as I am told its teeth are like those of the lake-trout; but on this information I cannot depend, not having been given by a naturalist. There being males only met with, may perhaps be accounted for by the circumstance that the female trout, in the act of spawning, is more easily taken; and, consequently, none escape long enough to attain so large a size. Here is our boat and boatmen. Let us lose no time

in putting together our rods, and starting on our evening excursion. Step in. As there is little breeze, we will go towards the further end of the lake, trolling as we go, and take our chance for a little more wind, and only a little more is required to try our flies in returning, — rough water, I am assured, being here unfavourable for sport. I shall use my brass minnow.

AMICUS. And I shall troll with flies. What kind had I best use?

PISCATOR. The cock-a-bundy and Broughton point are esteemed good killing flies here. You cannot do better than try them, and for your third dropper I would recommend a red hackle.

AMICUS. How different is this lower part of the lake, which we have at length reached, from the upper! There all is in harmony; the pastoral little meadows, the lonely farm-houses, the upland treeless enclosures, the wild mountains,—these the grand features of the scene. Here, is there not rather incongruity than harmony? at least to my mind: the villa, such as that amongst the trees and the ornamental planting about it, do not accord well with the

desolate wild Screens with which they stand so in contrast.

PISCATOR. As a matter of taste, I am disposed to agree with you. Yet I almost envy the proprietor of that pretty villa, and I certainly cannot but admire his courage in having selected such a spot for his residence, and in having planted so largely. Who would have supposed that trees could so flourish here, for already, you see, there are many of a respectable size? You too, I think, might envy the proprietor were you to land and see how, from some points of view, the incongruity you complain of disappears, as is the case when the wood forms either the foreground or the middle distance to the landscape, adding beauty to almost sublimity.

AMICUS. Our fishing in returning has been little better than our trolling. I have taken only two small trouts, and you, I perceive, have taken only two or three more, and the largest of them under half-a-pound.

PISCATOR. The wind and weather have not favoured us; let us hope for better success tomorrow morning.

AMICUS. I was up early, and before you, wishing to see more of this valley. I walked up the height, from whence I could look down into Morsdale Bottom, which, owing to bright sunshine, I found less gloomy than I expected. I had the company of the school-master, of whom last night we had so favourable an account from our worthy hostess, the farmer's wife. He seems to me an excellent specimen of the Dale-teacher. Anywhere he might be taken for a school-master, so formal in his conversation, and a little dictatorial; but at the same time modest and simple-mannered, as if his natural disposition could not be overpowered by his calling. He interested me by what he told me of himself and his little flock, how his only payment from the parents of the children he taught was in board and lodging, residing with each family a week or more in turn, according to the number of scholars the family yielded,—a week the allowance for each one. At this time his abode is here, in this very house, and for three weeks, three of the seven children belonging to the farmer being under his care. At the end of the three weeks, he will take up his abode with the next family in

turn, he says, and so on in succession throughout the year, there being no interruption, I understood him to say, to his labours. His salary, *i. e.* money salary, is the small one of 8*l.* a year, and that from an endowment, if I was correctly informed.

PISCATOR. I know the man and respect him, and know that he is respected, and a welcome guest from house to house. The manner in which he is remunerated is far better, is more friendly and kind than that of the "whittle-gait," a mode in usage in many of the other Cumberland dales, according to which the school-master has to seek his victuals merely from the houses in succession, the children of which he teaches, without having a bed in the house, or being considered an inmate, and consequently has to trudge often from a distance to his lodging, which, if he be a bachelor, as our friend is, must be comfortless enough. As we go to the lake after breakfast, we will look in on his little school. The schoolroom is by the road side, and in size is small, in just proportion with the church, and therefore I think we may justly conclude, the smallest in the kingdom. Both the church and schoolroom present a

singular contrast with the barns, which here, as in most parts of the Lake District, are large and substantial buildings, greatly larger even than the dwelling-houses. But there is reason in this disparity,—they are so capacious to hold the hay required for the winter feed of the flocks,—those belonging to this valley, reckoning the number in each, amounting to many thousands, which during the summer range the fells.*

AMICUS. What you have just said reminds me of a pretty sight I saw in my morning ramble,—a flock of two or three hundred sheep descending like a little army from the higher fells, marshalled by the shepherds' dogs, and followed in the rear by the shepherds themselves. Enquiring, I learnt they were driven down for change of pasture, now the hay had been gathered in, the change being considered serviceable to the ewes and lambs.

PISCATOR. The change you speak of is commonly practised in the Lake District. And,

* Three thousand two hundred and two was the actual number at the time of our visit: the largest flock of the five, one of one thousand two hundred; the smallest of two hundred and two.

in connection with it, I may mention that whilst on the fells, at least in my neighbourhood, they become of a very dark and uncomely hue, as if smirched with soot, which I believe to be really the case, — soot wafted from the nearest manufacturing districts to our hills; which said soot, I would hope may, in compensation, whilst freeing them from a nuisance, help to fertilise our upland pastures. What confirms me in forming this opinion of the source of the blackening matter is, that I have often seen a black pellicle, or thin film on our lakes and mountain tarns, occurring simultaneously with light rain in an almost calm state of the atmosphere after dark and windy weather; and moreover from finding the matter of the tarn-film, and of that adhering to the fleeces of the sheep, to possess the chemical qualities of soot.

AMICUS. I can readily believe what you say, and adopt your opinion, considering how heavier matters than soot, or the substance of smoke, are conveyed by the wind to distances that may be called immense. When in the Mediterranean, it was in 1830, I witnessed at Malta a shower of dust that hid the sun, con-

sisting of earthy particles, which spread over thousands of square miles of that sea, having been observed to fall about the same time in Sicily, Sardinia, and many parts of Italy, as well as in Malta, supposed to have been raised from the deserts of Africa, and driven by a wind or gale known to have prevailed on that coast, to the limits of its force: the dust fell when there was a lull. Analogous to this, when in the West Indies, I saw in Barbadoes the remains of a shower of volcanic dust, in places some lines thick, which occurred during the last eruption of the Soufriere mountain in St. Vincent, in 1812, at least sixty miles distant in a straight line, and which, in falling, not only hid the sun, but so obscured its light as to create the darkness of night at midday.

PISCATOR. We were speaking of the school-master — a more important subject: I can assure you that the children, whom on a former occasion I had the curiosity to examine, I found as well advanced in reading as those in the better class of our village schools. Besides reading, they are taught writing, the common rules of arithmetic, and, as the master said, a little geography. When I last paid a visit to

the school, the girls were receiving their lesson, the boys were out at play.

AMICUS. I like to think of this primitive teacher, and of the respect attached to his character for his usefulness and good conduct. I hope he is aided by the clergyman, whose comfortable house and spacious barns you pointed out to me, and who, with his 30*l.* a year salary, house and glebe, is a comparatively wealthy man.

PISCATOR. I believe not ; but do not ask me about him, for what I have heard I could not repeat with any satisfaction. You have read of Robert Walker, that remarkable man, the former pastor of Seathwaite, in the vale of the Duddon. Would that he were taken and followed as a model by the clergymen of the dales. Too frequently, judging from what has been told me, they are the reverse of him ; neither making themselves useful nor respected ; lowering themselves mentally, and consequently not elevating the minds of the people under their care ; too often, in brief, giving way to drinking, and falling into low sottish habits.

AMICUS. I almost regret having started the subject ; yet I should not say so ; for what you

have stated may help to explain one of the peculiarities of the dale people which has always puzzled me; I allude to their feeble religious feeling, their want of poetical sentiment, and of the imaginative faculty—admitted, I think, by you in our conversation at Santon Bridge — feelings these and sentiments which we are disposed to associate with mountain scenery, and which we so often find so associated, whether in the instance of our own, the Scottish Highlanders, the Vaudois of the Vallais, or the Nestorian Christians of the Chaldean mountains.

PISCATOR. The subject is a delicate, as well as an obscure and painful one. The Dale-clergymen, in most instances, have been Dalemen, who have entered the church as a business for maintenance. Poorly paid, as they commonly are, and withdrawn from the society of educated men, is it surprising that they should fall into the habits of those with whom they associate, attend more to farming than to learning, to the culture of their land than of themselves; and if not so occupied, do worse in their idleness? Unless there be strength of character and worthy energy with resolve,

I do not see how deterioration, under such circumstances, is to be avoided ; or how, generally speaking, better influences can be expected to be exercised on the minds of the people. I have heard it remarked, and that by a worthy successor of Robert Walker, not his immediate successor, it was in expressing disappointment of the people, — that, provided he, the clergyman, drank gin and water with them, they would be satisfied, and require no more from him. I should add, he had been but a short time with them, yet long enough to make him despair of the grown-up generation. Sometimes I have thought that a change of system might be useful, and correct the evil, — the adoption of one somewhat like that followed by the Methodists, that of relieving the ministers periodically, and selecting men best fitted for the work before them ; you know the adage, if I may introduce so humble a one, when speaking on so high a subject, of the new broom and its efficacy ; and there are, are there not ? other adages as telling and in point. Even as regards the ordinary race of men, — being confined long to one spot, to the same routine of

duties, too often has an injurious and deadening effect on the faculties, leading to a *tædium vitæ*, to vice, and sometimes even to suicide. Our army was an example of the kind during the late long peace, especially the regiments stationed in our colonies before the relief plan was entered upon, viz., that of changing them every third year. In Malta and Gibraltar, I remember, striking instances occurred, illustrating what I have said; in the latter garrison, when the *tædium* had reached its acme, it was shown by frequency of desertion; in the former, where desertion was less practicable from its being an island, by frequency of suicide. As to the character of the Dales-people, I am disposed to think that, such as it is, it acts more at present on their ministers, than any neglect on the part of the latter on them. Let us discuss this further some other time. Our car is arrived from Strands to take us to Ennerdale. As the wind is high, too high for a boat on the lake, we will stop and try the fishing from the shore, from whence, I am assured, it is commonly as good as from a boat, owing to the great depth of the water at a distance from the shore.

AMICUS. I suppose in the deep water there is little feed; and on that account the shore-fishing here, where the lath is prohibited, is not inferior to the other. Pray let us not forget the school-room in passing.



COLLOQUY V.

Ennerdale Lake.—Lake-fishing continued.

AMICUS.



AM charmed with this lake, and not a little pleased with our drive here. Rarely, in so short a space, have I witnessed greater and more sudden transitions of scenery. First, on leaving Wasdale-head, and arriving at the pretty village of Strands in Nether-Wasdale, though little more than three miles distant, we had left behind the wild and grand, the pastoral and mountain, for the comparatively tame and cultivated, a cheerful hilly country, with sufficiency of wood, a good proportion of arable land, now in its harvest glory, and no want of substantial farm-houses, with here and there a house of greater pretensions, denoting the well-kept country gentleman's residence. Next,

after quitting Calder Bridge, where, thanks to its second inn, we succeeded in getting a car, how sudden was the change from the rich park bordering the river and village, it almost a town, to the naked upland fell, seemingly stretching away on the right interminably into the wild mountain district from which we had started. And, next in our descent, how rapid was our passage from the bordering hilly corn country into this, in one direction at least hardly less wild and grand than that from which we took our departure.

PISCATOR. We are, remember, on the borders of the Lake District, and the transitions you speak of are the natural consequences. We witnessed the same when we visited Haweswater last year, going from Shap-fells to Bampton Grange, and from thence by Lowther to Pooley Bridge and Ulswater. The variety afforded in these border rambles is, to me, very delightful, — a variety not confined to scenery, but extending as much, or more, to almost every particular object that meets the eye, the crops, the farm-houses, the natives, and even the wild vegetation by the way side. I hope you saw and admired the beautiful colouring in

many a spot after our leaving Strands, between it and Calder Bridge, — the golden blossom of the gorse, mixed with the purple heath and blue bell.

AMICUS. I did—in Autumn reminding me of spring; and you, I hope, saw at Strands the village maidens performing their toilet at the little stream, which runs close to the inn, nowise abashed at being observed, as if it were their regular habit; to be sure, it consisted merely in the washing of their face, hands and arms, and the combing their hair; and the time was the early morning, when few were out and stirring.

PISCATOR. That I did; and that, too, interested me, as marking primitive ways; I witnessed it in going to the church, one of the same form as that of Wasdale-head, but triple its size, and with the complement of two bells to its belfry, and a churchyard well filled with graves and grave-stones inscribed with simple lines "*in memoriam*," — very many of them of persons of advanced ages; the church (a dependency of St. Bees) having the privilege of burying, whilst that at Wasdale-head is limited in its offices to marrying and chris-

tening. This I mention, lest, from having seen no grave-stones in its churchyard, you might come to the wrong conclusion that they are there dispensed with, which I believe is no where the case in the Lake District.

AMICUS. Even short as our stay was at Strands, I did not neglect the churchyard, nor fail to observe what you speak of. Another thing I saw which pleased me was that in the list of those on the church door liable to fill parish offices, all but one were landed proprietors, yeomen, or, in the language of the country, statesmen. In crossing the fell, the driver called it "an unstinted common." What does that mean?

PISCATOR. A common in the strictest sense of the word, in contradistinction to a stinted one, in which there is some kind of division or limited right. This fell, I have been informed, belongs to Calder Bridge, and being "unstinted," any one living there possessing but the smallest portion of land may send on the common as many sheep, horses, or cattle, as he pleases. This is a great boon, and as such I believe is peculiar to England, and may have had some influence in checking that abject poverty

and dependence which we too frequently witness amongst the peasantry of Ireland and Scotland, where there is no common land. The notion is an old one; there are some interesting remarks on the subject in Languet's Letters to his friend Sir Philip Sidney, not unworthy of attention at the present time.

AMICUS. I cannot but think with you, that the advantage is a great one; and may it long be continued, for the sake of the small proprietors! What an advantage to a labourer, as I understand it, to inhabit a dwelling with a right of common, on which he can feed a cow or a few sheep; and what a motive in the desire to possess them, and better his circumstances, to labour hard and put by his earnings, and defer marriage. I have read those letters to which you refer, and if I remember right, the occasion of the reflections was the then tendency towards enclosing and turning common lands into private pastures, and thereby diminishing the means of subsistence of the people, and consequently their numbers,—the people, in the old doctrine of Languet and Sidney, “an abundant people,” constituting “the surest

strength of a country." In crossing the fell, I learnt that it is enclosed — though an extent of many miles — the enclosing wall the work, at a distant period, of the Calder Bridge people; and I remarked that though called fell, it yields good pasture, is little infested with rushes, and, as far as I could see, is entirely without peat or bog, — indeed, the absence of bog in the Lake District, comparing it with the Highlands of Scotland, or with most parts of Ireland, surprises me.

PISCATOR. The absence is not entire. There are some low situations in the district, or on its confines, where there is perfect peat, and others, even on the high grounds, where it is met with in the act of forming. Of the former a good example is afforded in more than one of the valleys lying between the mountains and the sea, between Broughton and Ulverstone. Why peat is not so common here as in Ireland and Scotland may be owing to some difference in the features of the country, and also to some difference of climate. The steepness of the declivities, the rapid descent of most of the valleys, are hardly favourable situations for the formation of bog; and the heavy rains producing torrents, with occasional drought, must likewise

be unfavourable. Besides, there may be some special cause in Ireland favouring the growth of bogs, which may be absent here. In Belgium and Holland, one would expect to find rushes of common occurrence; yet, in a little tour I recently made through a good part of both countries, I hardly ever saw a rush. What determines the growth of one plant more than another,—and bog, remember, is formed by the decay of certain aquatic plants,—is always more or less a problem. In crossing the fell, how vast was the view! in one direction, the Solway and the hills of Dumfriesshire, in another, the open sea, and the Isle of Man, like a shadow in the horizon.

AMICUS. What impressed me most were some masses of clouds, resembling distant snow-capped Alps, both in form and colouring. How grand I thought would the appearance have been considered,—what an effect it would have had on the mind, were the forms real mountains, instead of their simulacra!

PISCATOR. Your reflection is just as regards impression; and your instance is a good example in point:—how much depends on association; that is, on the ideas connected with the

appearances! Rob what is most esteemed and held to be precious of this, — whether a ribbon or a jewel, — and how poor and valueless they become! But see, our boatman is beckoning to us; and not too soon, as we seem to be in danger of passing into the sentimental. Whilst you are finishing the putting together your rod (mine is in order), I will step into the inn, — well called the “Angler’s Inn,” and give some directions for our evening meal, and secure our beds; a necessary precaution where tourists often come in suddenly and unexpectedly.

AMICUS. You did well, for I see a party approaching. Now we are afloat, tell me, if you please, the names of the more conspicuous hills which rise in varied forms and different distances so finely above the lake.

PISCATOR. I admire with you these hills, they are so picturesque in their forms and grouping, and, as their names imply, bearing resemblance, in many instances, to familiar objects, the works of man, a circumstance, I fancy, which has a heightening impressive effect on the mind. But, to answer your question: that nearest headland projecting into

the lake, the emerald green summit of which is so conspicuous and beautiful in sunshine, is Angle-fell, so called from the goodness of the fishing-ground below, where, projecting into the water, is a rock called "Angle-stone." That distant mountain overtopping the others, rising column-like, is the well-known "Pillar." That one of more massive form is Green Gable. Those others are High Fell, Hardess, and Bowness-knot.

AMICUS. What is that midway in the Lake, where it is narrowest, between Angle-fell and the opposite promontory? Is it a boat or a rock?

PISCATOR. Indeed, it resembles a boat, and at a distance may well be mistaken for one; but it is no such thing; neither is it a rock; in brief, it is a puzzle, for it is a collection of water-worn stones, the largest not exceeding a man's head in size. Judging from the appearance, you would say surely it must be artificial, the work of man; yet there is no tradition in the country that a single stone was ever conveyed to the spot by man; and then the improbability of forming an islet of stones in the middle of this lake is so great

as to discountenance even the romance of the attempt. The solution of the problem I believe to be, that it is of glacier origin, and a portion of an ancient moraine. I have examined it with some care, and this is the only conclusion I can arrive at.

AMICUS. What are its dimensions, and what the depth of water adjoining?

PISCATOR. It may be about twelve yards in length, and three or four where widest; you see, it tapers to a point at each end. There is deep water on each side, but deepest at its upper side; from its ends a shoal extends across the lake, of which the islet may be considered the summit, the shoal, like it, where I could observe it, being formed of small rounded stones.

AMICUS. A very curious phenomenon, and to my mind well explained: I must land on it before we return.

PISCATOR. That we will do after going to the head of the lake, where I wish to show you the charr-dubb, — the breeding place of the charr, of which I made mention to you on a former occasion.* As it is calm, all we can

* The Angler and his Friend, p. 246.

do in the way of fishing is by trolling, repeating our practice in Wastwater.

AMICUS. Judging from the appearance of the lake, I infer it is about the size of Wastwater; and judging from the height of the enclosing hills, in parts it must be almost as deep.

PISCATOR. You are not far from the mark. It is about three miles long; about one mile wide where widest, and about half a mile where narrowest; where deepest, it is said to be twenty-five fathoms. Its freezing is a rare occurrence; last winter, that of 1854-5, the greatest part of it, the boatman says, was frozen over.

AMICUS. How much of its beauty it owes to its irregularity of form,—these ins and outs of its shores, and their varied aspect, wooded and naked, wild and cultivated, meadow land and rock; truly in its character a border-lake!

PISCATOR. We are nearing the head of the lake: it is time to wind up. The fish are no in a feeding mood; we have not had a single run. Observe the bottom, how it is formed of shingle. Here, I am told, a good many charr are known to spawn.

AMICUS. Our boatman has cleverly brought us up this narrow arm of the lake; and now you say we must land, to see the charr-dubb.

PISCATOR. Here we are at it. Observe it well; how shallow it is,—now the water is low, not more than one or two feet deep, and of equable depth from bank to bank, and about the average width of thirty feet, with a bottom throughout well adapted for spawning, composed of sand, gravel, and stones. Were it not for the slight fall where it joins the lake, denoted by the ripple, it might be a question whether it is not a continuation of the narrow branch of the lake rather than an expansion of the tributary rivulet, the Lissa, — Lissa-beck in the language of the country.

AMICUS. I am glad to have seen the dubb. From the term, I had formed a different idea of it; I had fancied it a deep pool, and as such ill fitted for a breeding place.

PISCATOR. I experienced the same difficulty till I saw it and found how, from its situation and other circumstances, it is well adapted for the breeding place of a fish like the charr, that commonly spawns in the lake itself.

AMICUS. Our boatman tells me that in

November, when the charr enter the dubb, so great is the crowd of fish, that the water is actually darkened by them. What a curious sight it must be !

PISCATOR. I have been assured of the same by a friend, a naturalist, who has witnessed it himself, as I hope some day to do.

AMICUS. Here in the grass is a young toad, fully formed, yet so small, that very recently it must have been a tadpole. In miniature, it has the repulsive aspect of the full-grown reptile ! Is its ugliness its defence ? Its activity is hardly sufficient to secure it against enemies. How easily I have caught it !

PISCATOR. Its aspect certainly is as little inviting as that of the full-grown, but it is not to this, I apprehend, it owes its safety ; rather, as in the instance of its senior, to its being unpalatable. If your curiosity is strong enough to overcome an aversion, and you bring the little toad in contact with the tip of your tongue, you will experience a disagreeable taste ; at least, this is the result of my experience ; and leading me to the conclusion that the structure of its young skin, like that of the old animal, is glandular, and its

glandules capable of secreting an acrid, offensive matter.

AMICUS. Is it not Shakspeare, through his witches in the dark cave by the side of their bubbling cauldron, that speaks of the "sweltered venom" of the toad? Yet I have been taught to believe—and Cuvier is my authority,—that the toad is harmless, and the notion of its poison a vulgar error.

PISCATOR. According to two countrymen of the great naturalist, who have recently given their attention to the subject, not only is the toad poisonous, but its poison is of a very deadly kind; such, they say, is the conclusion they have been led to by their experiments.

AMICUS. What am I to believe? What is your belief in the matter?

PISCATOR. That which I before mentioned, viz., that the secretion yielded by the cutaneous glandules is an acrid, offensive matter, not such a poison as to be entitled to be called deadly. Such trials as I have made, and I have made many, only admit of this inference. But, apart from experiment, it is not easy, nor do I think it wise, to put aside the doctrine of final causes; viewed in this relation, it seems

to me more satisfactory that such a helpless animal, and one so useful in our gardens as a devourer of insects, worms, and slugs, should owe its safety to an acrid secretion, sufficiently acrid for the purpose, than to an intensely poisonous one, which can be of no use to the creature in procuring it its food. We linger here too long; let us away. The want of wind, and the perfect purity and clearness of the water of the dubb, in which I see fish rising, may caution us not to wet our lines here.

AMICUS. See, a ripple is appearing. We are now a good way down the lake, and still without a run. Let us give up trolling, and try our best flies and finest tackle. I shall use a casting-line delicately graduated, made of gut that has been passed through a "gut-finer," an ingenious little implement, for the knowledge of which I stand indebted to an accomplished angler. I see there is a reddish fly on the water, and the fish are beginning to stir and rise.

PISCATOR. We may make the trial: I shall use a casting-line, ending in a single hair, and small flies tied to hair. But though we may put forth all our skill, I cannot be sanguine of

success, it is so bright; and the little wind that is, is from a bad quarter,—the chilling and inauspicious east. Would that we had a westerly or south-westerly breeze, and that the month was April or May, when the fishing is best, instead of September, when I believe it is worst. I have heard of an angler who, at a favourable time and season, has killed here in one day, with his single rod, fourteen dozen, many of a pound, but the majority under six ounces. Further to enhance your opinion of Ennerdale Lake as a fishing station, I may mention, that trout even of six pounds are occasionally taken with the troll, and even of eight pounds with the net; and that it is frequented by the salmon. And now, whilst wielding our rods, I fear to little purpose, tell me, if you please, of your “gut-finer,” for it is new to me.

AMICUS. It is very simple,—a steel blade, about four inches long, and less than one wide, in which sixteen circular apertures have been drilled, each provided with an inner rasping edge, and from the first to the last in regular gradation as to size, so that by passing the gut through them in succession, you may reduce it

to any degree of fineness you please. The instrument is to be had at a fishing-tackle shop in Derby; thence I got the one I have, and by post; it weighs under an ounce. The friend at whose recommendation I got it assures me—and this is the chief recommendation—that using gut fined by it, he has been able to take good fish, over a pound, in still water, where, with ordinary tackle, nothing can be done. I cannot speak of it yet from my own experience.

PISCATOR. The gut you have shown me, so prepared, is beautifully fine, and for fine fishing I do not doubt must be invaluable, and superior, I should think, to the single hair. I hope we shall presently have proof of its excellence.

AMICUS. The sun is set, and the fish have long ceased rising. Is it not time to stop? We have had a pleasant day, thanks to the scenery, not to our sport. The latter has as much come short of my expectations, as the former has exceeded them; so I am well content though even my fine gut has had little efficacy. I see in our pannier there are less than a dozen trout, and not one of them of a respectable size.

The boatman tells me, as a consolation, that he has witnessed as little success before, but that rarely, an addition nowise consolatory.

PISCATOR. Remember, that on starting I foreboded in some measure what has occurred, founded on the season, and more so on the low state of the water, and promised you rather the enjoyments of scenery than angling success. To-morrow, with a like interest—that is, scenery rather than fishing—we will go to Eskdale. That dale, I am sure, will interest you in its wild beauty and varied character. Some future day, and not later in the spring than the first week in May, I hope we may have our revenge here, redeem our character as anglers, and give your fine gut a fair trial.



COLLOQUY VI.

Eskdale, and the River Esk.

AMICUS.



IN this bleak morning, with a cold easterly wind, and leaden sky, we have done well in taking the lower road to the railway, which you say passes about two miles and a half from Calder Bridge at Sellafiel.

PISCATOR. We shall not only avoid the fell which ought to be crossed in fine weather, but we shall, moreover, see another variety of country, and pass through Egremont, a place famed in poetic story.

AMICUS. What is the little village we have just left behind us, bordering the river that runs out of the lake?

PISCATOR. It is the village of Ennerdale, and the river is the Ehen. I have been guilty of

an omission, both in coming and going, in not calling your attention to it, to the churchyard on one side of the road, and the clergyman's dwelling on the other, for they are the scene of Wordsworth's beautiful and pathetic poem, "The Brothers."

AMICUS. Both in going and returning, I had a passing glance at them. In the churchyard I observed some grave-stones. Are they of later date than that affecting poem? For, if I recollect rightly, it is mentioned therein, as denoting the simple primitive manners of the people—the natives of this secluded district—that grave-stones were not used here.

PISCATOR. True: the poet's words are,—

"In our churchyard
Is neither epitaph nor monument;
Tombstone nor name — only the turf we tread;
And a few natural graves."

But in this particular he idealised: as I before said, grave-stones are to be met with in every burying-ground of the district, however wild its situation and primitive the manner of the people. In a note to the poem, the author mentions that "it was intended to conclude a series of pastorals, the scene of which was

laid amongst the mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland." How much is it to be regretted that the intention was not carried into effect, though perhaps you will say, it has been accomplished in the body of his poetry; that his poems altogether are a great pastoral, and almost all that can be desired as regards the Lake District. Be this as it may, need I remark that in these delightful productions of the poet's mind, we must not expect literal exactness of description. His object was to convey his own impressions to the minds of his readers; and this he probably thought he could best effect after the manner of the accomplished artist, whether in sculpture or painting, by the refining, idealising method. This I mention in consequence of your remark. Had the poet been more exact, would he have been more successful? His descriptions probably would have ceased to be poetry, and might have been unendurably tiresome. And I mention this the more to impress on you that in reading Wordsworth, even when particular objects are introduced, whether mountain, lake, or ruin, church or dwelling, we are not to look for exactness of local descrip-

tion. This grave-yard is one instance in point; the mountain, "The Pillar," of which notice is taken in the same poem, is another: the younger of the two brothers is described as having ascended this mountain, falling asleep on its summit, and subject to the malady of walking in his sleep, rising and losing his life in his precipitous fall; yet when the poem was written, "The Pillar" mountain was considered inaccessible; we are assured, in a recent history of Cumberland, that till 1826 it had never been scaled.

AMICUS. I thank you for the caution, and shall repeat it to some friends of mine, who occasionally trouble me, when reading the "Excursion," to point out to them the exact spots the scenes of the incidents described. As to the justness of the thing, I am hardly competent to judge. I am a great advocate for truthfulness, even in poetry, and fancied that truthfulness, even to a fault as some thought, was one of the characteristics of Wordsworth's poetry.

PISCATOR. So it is in general; from no writings, I believe, can you derive a more accurate idea of the Lake Country than from his, though

no one description may be strictly exact. I may have my doubts as to the theory, as you have, with all deference to the artistic views of a man who considered poetry as matter of highest art, and elaborated his verse accordingly.

AMICUS. What a change in the aspect of the country! We seem to be in a region of iron and forges. The road is actually coloured by iron, so too are the dresses of the labourers, and what a number of carts we have passed bearing iron-ore, as I infer, to be smelted, where in more than one spot in the distance we see volumes of smoke pouring forth into the atmosphere. And lo! a turnpike gate, the first we have come to since we left the turnpike road at Ambleside. And lo! an embankment, thrusting itself out in the valley as if it were a railway in growth.

PISCATOR. It is a branch railway in progress, from the coast junction line, of which we shall soon have the benefit. We are now in a district of the red sandstone formation, in which there is limestone, coal, and iron; and in what you point out, you see the consequences. These, limestone, coal, and iron,

where there is intelligent energy amongst the people, are as surely productive of manufactures, as the mountain fells and wholesome pastoral valleys are of flocks and herds.

AMICUS. And this is Egremont through which we are now passing. Its somewhat trist appearance, with those castellated ruins, of imposing aspect on the adjoining mount, is in accordance with its name. Surely it is a declining place. It reminds me a little, in its single long street, and those thatched dark-roofed dwellings, breaking the line of slate-roofed houses, of an Irish country town.

PISCATOR. Like the castle, I believe it has seen better days; and will probably, though not so with the castle, see them again, when the railway is completed; but even now its material condition may be better than it appears, for it is supported by industry, and is not without productive trades, especially tan-yards.

AMICUS. You spoke of Egremont's fame in poetic story: what of it?

PISCATOR. That fame is connected with the history of the castle and its earlier possessors, the Lucys. The most interesting le-

gend belonging to it you will find described in spirited verse by Wordsworth, "The Horn of Egremont," a tale of two noble brothers, one noble by nature as well as birth, the other, a craven and a fratricide in intention, prosperous in villany for a while, but at length, exposed and punished, contrite and forgiven. But read the poem; it is as happy an example of poetry in action, as the other poem, "The Brothers," is of poetry in meditation; the contrast is altogether striking.

AMICUS. Here we are at the Sellafiel Station, and with a few minutes to spare before the arrival of the train that is to convey us on. What a hut of a station! And what a spot for a station! the wide sea in front, a low lying land in the rear, and a long waste of sandy shore making the junction; rarely have I seen a less inviting spot, or more dreary landscape.

PISCATOR. Pray make allowance for the murky sky, the chilling east wind, and the lowering clouds, shutting out the distant mountains. On a fine day, with sunshine on the sea and the mountains unobscured under a bright sky, you might think differently of it. See,

there is the estuary of the river, which, little more than two hours ago, we saw pleasantly gliding out of its parent lake, now about to be lost in the all-devouring and boundless sea.

AMICUS. Our conversation this morning seems to have made you somewhat poetical. With equal justice the sea may be considered the parent of the stream,—the ocean the common parent of all streams. What it receives it returns, and in a purer state; and so both are fed and preserved in their unchanging condition; both ever giving and ever taking. But of the river,—as an angler I should like to know of its fishing. In its sluggish course it is unpromising.

PISCATOR. The angler who can reconcile his conscience to the killing of Salmon-fry, when about to take their departure from their native stream, may, I am assured, have good sport here in the latter end of April, and the beginning of May, when they are of their largest size and best condition as smelts; and, as it said that for a while they go backward and forward, gradually seasoning themselves to the salt water, a day's fishing here at that season, to determine this point, might be

instructive. Young salmon of half a pound, I am told, are occasionally taken here when the smelts are migrating.

AMICUS. A quarter of an hour's "ride," as the Americans would call it, has brought us to Ravenglass. This town, too, seems to have seen better days.

PISCATOR. Its sand-barred harbour, the estuary of three rivers, the Irt, Ite, and Esk, is better adapted for receiving the small coasting craft of the olden time than the larger vessels now in use; and at that time there were more border baronial residences and religious houses, priories and monasteries than at present, and with more of influence and power; hence, it may be, its falling off. As there is nothing to detain us here, the sooner we start for Eskdale the better. The car with its single horse is ready.

AMICUS. What a change again, and how sudden! I little expected these stately groves; and if I am not mistaken, I see a castellated building through the trees.

PISCATOR. That building is Muncaster Castle; and this fine avenue opening into Eskdale, and these stately woods, belong to the domain.

Did our time permit, we would go to the castle, for from it is a view of surpassing beauty, Eskdale in its whole length, from the sea to its liminary mountains.

AMICUS. Fortunately, the sun is shining out, blue sky is appearing, and the higher hills in the distance are showing themselves above the clouds. As we advance, how wilder and wilder it becomes, and with how many touches of beauty, — the river acquiring the character of the mountain stream, gushing amongst rocks from pool to pool, — the skirting hills pine-crowned, and the bosky hollows with all their variety of underwood. Even the few farm-houses we pass seem to denote transition in their aspect to a ruder and more primitive condition, — such as, perhaps, might be expected in going from a frequented to a more secluded region.

PISCATOR. The rock formation here is of a bolder kind than any we have yet seen, and the hills are nobler in their forms. The prevailing rock is granite, accounting for these forms; and the qualities of soil it yields on disintegration may equally account for the luxuriancy of the wild vegetation which we witness, and the fine

growth of timber amongst crags and precipices, as if designed for the study of the landscape-painter.

AMICUS. There is the sign of a public-house. Is that to be our resting place? In its lowliness of appearance, it seems very suitable to its secluded situation.

PISCATOR. That is the "Wool Pack," a fitting name; wool is the chief commercial staple of the dale: I know it well. Like most of the public-houses of the dales, its proprietor is a farmer. The comforts it affords to the wayfaring man, for whom it is chiefly intended, are greater than might be expected, judging from its appearance. One objection to it is that it is rather far from the best part of the river for angling, and from the finest portion of the dale for its scenery. We will go about a mile higher, where I hope we shall find shelter; and where, if the good people of the farm are, as I trust, well and doing well, we shall be sure of a kind reception.

AMICUS. I hope you have not forgotten the way; our driver says he never was so far in Eskdale before. See, the road terminates! Where are we? What are we to do?

PISCATOR. Do not be uneasy. That gate opening into the meadow is our way. Beyond are the chimneys of the farm-house, rising above the trees. Though it is three years since my last visit, I cannot be mistaken; the house is the last in the dale.

AMICUS. A welcome cry, and yet in no friendly guise! What a rush of clamorous dogs!

PISCATOR. Were other wanting, a sure sign we are near the house. Those five or six barking dogs are sheep-dogs; it is a harvest field they are rushing from, at the sound of our wheels. The people must be there; so near, we are sure of finding the house open.

AMICUS. I thank you for bringing me to Brotherelkeld,—a name, you inform me, of the olden time.* The house, the situation, the family, are in happy keeping,—all smacking of the olden time, and in character with pastoral life;—at least, so it seems to me, at first sight. I liked the hearty welcome the old people gave you, and their quick recollection of you.

* Buther Elldr, the house of Buther, the older or old. See "The Northmen in Cumberland."

PISCATOR. These good people — the farmer and his wife — are what they appear; and, may I not say, something more, both in substance and worth. From the appearance of the old man in his rough apparel, you would hardly suppose him to be one of the largest sheep-farmers in the country, with a flock probably not under 2000; nor, from the hard aspect of the dame, and her curt words, would you expect so warm a heart and such genuine kindness. But I will not anticipate: while we are here, you will be able to judge for yourself; and I need not say be observant, for the place is a study; I hardly know another affording so good an example of the dale shepherd's life. But we must not forget Eskdale and our angling. On a former occasion, I explored the higher dale, and have a pleasant recollection of its wildness and grandeur. Do see it; you cannot miss the way; you can fish as you go. I will presently follow, and we will meet here in the evening.

AMICUS. Well met. Since we parted at noon, I have not seen the face of man. How

profound are these mountain solitudes, and how dismal they must be in gloomy weather. Happily, there were gleams of sunshine, patches of blue sky with light clouds over head, and with cattle here and sheep there, even in the wildest and most secluded spots where not the faintest vestige of man was to be seen, I felt only a cheerful influence, reminding me of what I used to feel within the tropics, when in a mountainous region, three or four thousand feet above the level of the sea, where I could almost tell the elevation by the pleasant inward feeling, as if breathing an air at once soothing and exhilarating.

PISCATOR. I have experienced what you describe; it is one of the pleasures of mountain travel, especially in a warm climate. I hope you were not disappointed in what you saw.

AMICUS. No wise. I went up as far as the foot of Bowfell and Scawfell. The wild and dreary grandeur of the scenery there exceeded anything I have seen in the Lake District, and has left an impression I shall not soon forget. I tried the rivulet, but with no success, taking only, in the deeper pools, a few small ill-fed brook trout. Seeing the character of the stream, now so small,

with its wide shingly bed, denoting how at times it is a wide raging torrent, I was rather surprised at taking even these. Lower down, where the two streams meet to form the Esk, there I captured a half dozen better fed and larger fish, — the largest of herring size, and as many more in those deep and beautiful pools between that junction and the house. Never have I seen water of greater purity or of finer colouring, or a more picturesque succession of the rapid and still.

PISCATOR. I confined my fishing, and with success little exceeding yours, to the lower part which you so much admire, and justly. The light-coloured rock forming the channel of the river, the green skirting banks, the pure white of the falls, the equally pure and almost azure hue of the deep pools, are indeed charming in their variety and contrasts with the accompaniments of wood and meadow and marks of culture, separating this from the wilder naked mountain region which you ascended.

AMICUS. I can now more readily believe that the colour of water in mass is blue, for were it not for the faint yellowish hue reflected from the worn rock-basins, these pools would be entirely azure, little differing from that of

the sky, — that depending too on water, or aqueous vapour. Pray what is the rock? Is it not granite?

PISCATOR. In its forms it resembles granite, and belongs, I infer, to the same formation; but in composition it is different; I have some difficulty in giving it a name. Compact and finely crystalline, it is probably felspathic; the light hue it acquires from the effect of weathering is in accordance. Now let us sit down to our evening meal. Our kind hostess has her kettle boiling, her little round table spread before the wood fire, and some roasted potatoes ready. With the tea we have brought with us, and the remains of our piece of spiced beef, and the bread, butter, and milk she will provide, we cannot fail, if you have such an appetite as I have, making a hearty good comfortable meal. We are to have the room to ourselves, this outer room, "the house," as it is provincially called, not the inner, the spacious one in which we have just put our rods; and which I believe is never used excepting on grand occasions, such as the yearly clipping-feast, a christening, or a wedding.

AMICUS. Why, this is more than comfort

it is luxury. You in the nursing rocking-chair which you have chosen, I in the elbow-chair, both cushioned, — the chairs, I presume, of the old master and mistress; the cheerful hearth and our well-provisioned table; potatoes, milk, butter, all excellent.

PISCATOR. These are the produce of the farm, with the exception of the wheaten bread. The flour is imported; but the bread is made here, and with yeast from their own brewing. About this yeast I learnt a secret, when I was last here, how it can be kept good at least a month, by changing the water daily; and, what is also worth knowing, how brewer's yeast can be deprived of its bitterness by a like change of water.

AMICUS. Surely this bread, which reminds me of Spanish bread, and is superior to any I have tasted since I left Cadiz, is not household bread.

PISCATOR. It is "quality bread," as they call it, and is a dainty, I dare say, reserved for the old people. The family bread is oaten cake, of which there is a baking every two or three months. It and cheese are two of the chief articles of diet of the farm-servants.

AMICUS. As we were coming by train to Ravenglass, I looked into a recently published Guide-book of the Lake District, and read some particulars about the cheese of the district which surprised me, given, as they were, as matter-of-fact to show the backward and rude state of the country, and the benefit likely to result by the force of example, from intercourse, according to the writer, with a more enlightened and advanced stage of society. It, the cheese, is described as hard enough to strike fire with steel, as fit to be used as a substitute for flint in the gun-lock; and, marvel of marvels, it is told that one rolling down a hill side occasioned a conflagration by setting fire to the brushwood.

PISCATOR. You may well say "marvel of marvels." The skimmed-milk cheese of the district is certainly hard enough, and unavoidably, the butter being entirely and intentionally separated; but it is not miraculously hard; like other things, it is obedient to physical laws. Had the writer considered what are the qualities requisite for a substance to act the part of a flint to strike fire with steel, and the conjunction of circumstances necessary

to produce the effect, she would have escaped being imposed on by the laughter-making hyperboles of the shrewd and sometimes humorous natives. Need I remind you that, to strike fire with flint, a filament of steel must be abraded, which, heated by the friction of the collision, burns in the air by uniting suddenly with its oxygen. And, further, that no hardness that is known to belong to, or that can be imparted to any animal substance, not even bone or ivory, tooth or nail, is capable of producing the effect, *i. e.* the abrasion of steel, in the manner required. As to the advantages of intercourse such as are likely to result from the system of railways in progress, let us hope there will be an exchange of benefits; and that the dalespeople will not only derive some knowledge, and learn improved methods from their lowland neighbours, but that the latter also may learn something from the former, and most of all, not to hold them in disrespect.

AMICUS. Those who can entertain such a feeling towards them should come here to be disabused of it. Where have I ever seen more order, neatness, and propriety? I have

been prying about, but in vain, to find anything dirty or out of place. Upstairs, where I have been to change my wet shoes, the same order and neatness are to be seen as below, and not only in the comfortable spare bedrooms, where we are to sleep, but also in those of the servants. Even the oaken floors are polished. I am astonished; and also at the number and quantity of useful articles,—so much crockery, so much glass, and the endless variety of little useful articles. This within doors; but without, how different; I can see no garden ground, no vegetables grown, not a single flower; and in the fields, no green crops, only potatoes. In regard to these, may not lowland example be useful?

PISCATOR. I thought you would be surprised as well as pleased at what you saw of the domestic economy, seen as you have seen it in its ordinary working order. Did you observe the small detached building in the yard, opposite the entrance? it is the working kitchen, and may partly account for the perfect cleanliness of the house. The chief cause, however, as far as I have had an opportunity of observing, is, that everything is cleaned

the instant it has been used, and that instant put in its place, everything having a place. The contrivances for bestowing things away are curiously varied, — hooks, shelves, bags, drawers, and above all, chests, are in requisition for the purpose. In that large cupboard of old quaintly carved oak, the aumbry, as it would be called in Scotland, the family supply of oaten bread is kept. On the shelves, in the inner room, you might have seen a goodly array of cheeses; that orderly collection of big earthen jars, of small kegs and barrels, are for holding and conveying beer to the field labourers. Look at this wall; what a miscellany of things is there arranged. I wish you would make a catalogue of them; but that would tire an auctioneer; and long may the time be before any such labour be required! In the inner room the cupboards, the beaufets are as well replenished, and with the more valuable articles of glass and earthenware.

AMICUS. But why such an endless variety, and such profusion?

PISCATOR. I fancy these mark the family means and wants; — well to do in the world,

long settled here, far apart from borrowing help, and having occasionally to exercise large hospitality, for instance, at the sheep shearing, when, I am told, there are more than 100 persons collected, most of them dalesmen unpaid, volunteers to help in the clipping, with a few specially invited to witness the work and partake of the festivities, — all of whom are to be fed and feasted, — for such is the old usage on the occasion.

AMICUS. I should like to see our notable active hostess at such a time, and to witness the doings.

PISCATOR. Do you remember the sheep-shearing festivity as described by Shakspeare in his "Winter's Tale." From what I have heard, this, as conducted here, is very much the counterpart of that, the day being given to business, to work ; the evening to carousing, singing, and dancing ; and sure I am that the dame here is quite equal to her, the old farmer's wife in the play, in her best days, as described by him —

" — when my old wife liv'd, upon
This day, she was both pantler, butler, cook ;
Both dame and servant : welcom'd all : serv'd all."

AMICUS. It is interesting to find old usages preserved; and where can they be so well preserved as here, and in places like this? As I first observed, everything here smacks of the olden time: look at these cups and saucers; how antique is their pattern, how dark and grotesque the colouring and the figures on them. I can fancy them from Fienza. I have been asking whether rushlights are still in use here; and I am told they are, and are home made.

PISCATOR. See the stand for burning them, partly made of wood, the bottom; partly of iron, the stem, and the latter so constructed with its terminal cavity and side bracket, as to answer both for the rush candle and the "white candle," as the common tallow candle is called here.

AMICUS. Pray show me how it is used; and tell me how the rushlight is prepared, and why the common candle is called a "white candle?"

PISCATOR. To distinguish it from the greenish rush candle. The latter is prepared much in the same manner as in Connemara; here a mixture of butter and grease is employed to saturate the rush. And in burning, of

course it is placed obliquely at a regulated angle; and I may remark that, in using a common tallow candle, it is well to adopt the same practice, so that it may consume its own wick, and not require snuffing: the chemical reason of this I need not explain to you. You will observe that old habits and things have their resting place. Yet, I believe, only within certain limits, and that even in these seclusions, there is no want of tendency to change; all that is required is the conviction that the change will be beneficial and practicable. The dales people are shrewd people and keenly alive to their own interest. I was glad to hear,—it is an instance in point, — that the field labourers here are beginning to substitute coffee for beer. Our hostess tells me that they prefer it, finding it more refreshing than beer, and not so soon followed by thirst. The change has been made since my last visit; and, probably, on our next visit, we may find that coffee has given place to tea, — as experience proves that the latter, for the refreshment it affords, deserves the preference. This I have had assurance of from a distinguished Arctic explorer and naturalist. As to the absence of

flowers, vegetables, and green crops, noticed by you as a defect,—that of the two first, I apprehend, is characteristic of the absolute pastoral life; that of the last of the same — of a want of the goodly modern union of the pastoral and agricultural, which is more or less a desideratum throughout the dale district, and, I may say, the Lake District likewise.

AMICUS. Within the inner room is an inner, a bedroom. The door was open, and I looked into it. It too was a pattern of neatness and order, as if for show rather than use.

PISCATOR. That is the bedroom of the master and mistress, and comparing it with the servants' bedrooms, clean and decent as they are, marks well the difference of rank. The bed, I believe, is one of the best characteristics of condition, at least in all the lower grades of society.

AMICUS. I have been looking for books, somewhat curious to know the literature of the dales; but the only book I have found has been an almanac and of the present year.

PISCATOR. This too must surprise you; in truth, the dales folk are not very much of a reading people; they are too much occupied; and the men are so much abroad as to have

little time and opportunity for reading. Here they rise early, before day in the winter; they are little within doors; and they go to bed early, even in winter, almost as soon as it is dark, never using a light. Did you not observe them half an hour ago passing through, and how they took off their clouted shoes before going up stairs?— which, by the bye, may account, with the application of a little beeswax now and then, for the stairs and flooring being so clean and polished.

AMICUS. What a singular state! Now indeed I can fancy the dales people as representing a past period,— that when books were scarce and princely property; or somewhat later, when the few books in use were chained to the reading-desks.

PISCATOR. This idea of yours is rather an exaggerated one. Probably the books belonging to the family, now that the young people are settled in life and out in the world, are put by in some drawer or chest well cared for. Though not a reading people, I can assure you that commonly, in the poorest houses even, there is a shelf holding a few volumes.

AMICUS. Though I have not seen it, yet I

will believe there is a Bible in the house ; I am not so sure mentally of the stored library.

PISCATOR. Do not at least doubt the Bible. Did you in the best bedroom observe the framed sampler hung on the wall ? It pleased me much, so much indeed that I made a copy of the words worked on it by the daughter of our host, a maid, as stated, in her twelfth year. I will read them to you, for they too are of the olden time, and distinctive, as I hope and believe, of the simple morals and religion of the dales people : —

“ Be you to others kind and true,
As you'd have others be to you,
And neither say or do to men
Whate'er you would not take from them.

“ Teach me, Lord, Thy name to know,
Teach me, Lord, Thy name to love :
May I do Thy will below,
As Thy will is done above.”

AMICUS. Excellent words ; I thank you for repeating them. What a homily are they ; and how much more deserving of being imprinted on the mind than any of the formulas of the modern Positive Philosophy.

PISCATOR. And now, after our long talk, let

us say good night, and to our beds; remembering, however useful books may be, and book-learning, that all knowledge is not written, and that the most elaborate and profound, without such habits as we have here witnessed, is of little worth and of little avail in the conduct of life.



COLLOQUY VII.

The Lake-District revisited.—Varied Discussion, Local and Piscatory.

PISCATOR.



WELCOME again to my mountain home and to our pastoral valley. When you last visited us, autumn was advancing; the flocks were quitting the brown fells for the green meadows; and the District in the rich autumnal hues of its woodlands and mountain slopes was in its most attractive dress, according to the ordinary estimation of Lake-tourists.

AMICUS. It is a pleasure to me at all seasons to come here, apart even from that of shaking an old friend by the hand, and the receiving his friendly welcome. The season is indeed changed; and yet the change of aspect is not so great as I should have expected; for the

meadows now in April are only of a darker green, and the woodlands only more delicately tinted than they were in September; and as then, the flocks, I perceive, are in the lowland pastures. When I compare the two seasons, I hardly know which to like most, — each here, and indeed everywhere in the country, where the face of nature is fairly displayed, having so many charms. What is your opinion of each as regards beauty; or rather, I would ask you, what is your opinion as regards beauty of scenery of the District at the different periods of the year? and I am the more particular in asking, inasmuch as an acquaintance of mine, fastidious about scenery — unhappy man in being so fastidious! — has often questioned me about it.

PISCATOR. The inquiry is not easily answered, so much depending on individual taste and feeling, and even on the pursuits of individuals. My own opinion I will give you freely. First, I would remark that each season of the year has its peculiar beauties. Of spring and autumn I need not speak, they in their peculiarities are so well marked and striking. Summer and winter are more open to question; and perhaps

you will be surprised when I say, I hardly know which here to give the preference to. In the full-blown summer in this district there is almost an excess of verdure; all is beautiful of its kind, but there is comparatively little variety; the eye becomes tired for want of variety; it ranges from hill to valley, and the same hue, or nearly the same, the unfailing green, is the one predominating colour. In the winter, on the contrary, especially in a mild winter, the more common one here, in place of such monotony there is an endless diversity of colouring and effect. We have the dark evergreens, the pines, and yews, and hollies, imparting solemnity, the silver-barked birch, and the golden-trunked Scotch fir giving brightness to the woodland; then, there are the cryptogamous plants,—mosses, lichens, and some ferns, and in addition, the ivy in full strength of vegetation, clothing the rocks and the more venerable trees with a rich embroidery of many hues,—the finest green and silvery white the prevailing colours. Then, moreover, what we witness in the atmosphere—do not charge me with exaggeration if I say,—more than compensates as regards beauty for

any deficiencies on this account chargeable to the earth.

AMICUS. What of the winter atmosphere of which you speak with so much emphasis? Pray, be a little more explicit.

PISCATOR. The accidents of light and shadow, the qualities of clouds and mist; it is these I have in mind, and these are hardly to be described, which in the winter season are most remarkable, whether for beauty, as in fine weather with gleams of enlivening sunshine, or for grandeur of effect in bad, in the dark and driving storm. But let me not overpraise winter. It has its drawbacks, even in relation to scenery. There are times, as when the country is covered with snow, that even I cannot praise it. Then the face of nature is dreary and repulsive,—monotonously dreary, and chillingly repulsive. Snow may well be called nature's winding sheet! Fortunately, however, as I mentioned on a former occasion, snow-storms are of rare occurrence in the District, and the continuance of snow of short duration.

AMICUS. You have not spoken of your frozen state; for, I presume, favoured as you describe

your district to be, a time of frost is not unknown to you. What can you say in its commendation? How then is your landscape?

PISCATOR. I ought not to have forgotten a well set-in frost with which we are occasionally visited, as indeed you know from what you heard related when we were last year at Westwater,—an event the delight of the skater and fowler, of the young and active, and healthy, with its bright sunshine by day, and bright starlight by night, its clear sky and bracing air, and within doors the glowing fire, illustrating, may I say, the effect of the cold condensed air on the blood. Believe me then, our district is not without its charm of landscape. How magical, as it were, is the change that then comes over the scene, — the babbling brook silent, the liquid lake a glassy plain, the watery rocks brilliant with ice and pendent icicles! Look into the first book of “*The Prelude* ;” no doubt you know it; what a charming picture is there given of the aspect of nature at such a time! Moreover, to the inquirer, this is a time specially for his study, — the rock rifted by ice, the clod pulverised, the soil opened, the temperate stream favour-

able to life, flowing from beneath the ice covered lake; the tepid spring, so it seems by comparison, gushing from the frozen ground. How instructive are these! and how can they with other specialties, fail to excite both interest and admiration in the reflecting mind? When speaking of snow, I expressed myself unguardedly; I called it nature's winding sheet but, considering its use in the economy of nature, it ought not to be so called, unless indeed, we look to the revival under it; and that what is so death and shroud-like, is not an extinguisher but a preserver of vegetable life, a nourisher of the fertile earth.

AICMUS. What you say of your wintry aspect I am sure will be attractive to my enquiring friend. He has his own views about the season, independent of locality and scenery. He holds it to be the intellectual season,—that which throws us further from the sensuous south to the reflecting north; that which hardens and gives vigour to both our minds and bodies, checking effeminacy and preventing degeneracy. You would be amused to hear him speak of the influences, the ennobling and strengthening of this his favourite season;

illustrating his notions by comparing the feeble races of the south with the hardy races of the north ; he even goes so far as to maintain that, most of our great truths, especially in morals and religion, are of northern origin, or what is equivalent, of the mountain or desert. And, even in our northern regions, he is confident we owe the greatest efforts of genius, whether in science or literature, to winter. He refers, in confirmation, to what Milton says of his muse, — how its visitations were mostly between the autumnal and vernal equinox. Turn, he would add, to that great record of science, the “*Philosophical Transactions*,” and find if you can any important paper or announcements of discovery, unless bearing date of the same period of the year.

PISCATOR. Speculation is amusing, and, fairly followed out, is always more or less instructive. I hope to see your friend here, and to have his company by my winter fire-side, — a proper time and place for discussing such a topic. So far I can agree with him, that difficulties are requisite to stimulate the mind to exertion ; and that nothing very great or good has been accomplished in countries,

whether from climate or other circumstances, favouring rest and indulgence. The Jewish law was promulgated in the Desert, and from Mount Sinai ; the Mahommedan in the arid Arabia ; Rome rose to greatness contending with difficulties ; Spain fell off from her greatness when ease and indulgence took the place of exertion. But does not all history, the rise and fall of every empire and state, tell the same story ?

AMICUS. I believe so ; thankful, therefore, let us be — and can we be too thankful ? — that England has such a climate, and especially a winter climate, which I trust will always prevent our degenerating, aided, as our climate is, by our field and river sports, so conducive to manly exertion.

PISCATOR. What you now say reminds me of our favourite sport, and of my promise, when I invited your visit, to take you another ramble through our Lake District.

AMICUS. I shall be glad to be under your guidance ; and, at this season, I hope to have better sport than last year at a later season, — a hope founded on what you told me, that spring is the best time for trout-fishing.

Now, I pray, allow me to ask one or two questions on points connected with angling, or rather the natural history of the prized species. And first of their distribution: on a former occasion*, when expressing your doubts as to there being a parr, a distinct species, you mentioned an inquiry you were then engaged in, and some of the results you had obtained, tending to show how it was probable that the ova of the Salmonidæ might be conveyed by foreign agents from river to river, from lake to lake, and so the species might be introduced *de novo*. Pray, have you brought your inquiry to a conclusion? or what further progress have you made? Do tell me.

PISCATOR. It is too much to say that I have brought the inquiry to a conclusion,—if by that you mean I have exhausted it. That is not easily done, if ever accomplished, in any matter of physical research. However, I have obtained some additional results, not without interest, as I think you will consider them. I shall mention only those I consider the more important. First, I have found that

* The Angler and His Friend, p. 260.

the impregnated ova, when tolerably advanced, may be kept for many days in air, saturated with moisture, without suffering loss of vitality, or having their power sensibly impaired. Secondly, in accordance with the foregoing, that, in rainy weather, they will bear exposure to the atmosphere, if placed on moss or other moist plants, so long as three days, without detriment. Thirdly, that they are capable of bearing a reduction of temperature to thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit, *i. e.*, to the freezing point of water, and may be attached to ice, and included in ice, provided they are not themselves frozen, without losing their vitality. Now, reasoning from these results, there seems little difficulty in imagining how a certain diffusion of the species may be accomplished,—whether, as hinted at when we last conversed on the subject, by means of water-fowl, the ova adhering to their feet, beak, or plumage, or of other erratic animals, — or, to offer another conjecture, even by means of travelling masses of ice, glaciers, and icebergs. This last conjecture may seem far-fetched; but reflecting on the erratic masses of rock, so widely scattered from their original site, conveyed, there is good

reason to believe, through the instrumentality of ice, I think you will allow that this idea of the mode of distribution comes within the scope of probability.

AMICUS. What you say seems plausible; but is there not a more commonly received notion as to the manner of the spread of species, — at least, of certain species, those in greatest estimation, — viz., by artificial means rather than by natural? When speaking of the grayling, you mentioned the conjecture that it was introduced into this country in the time of the monastic institutions, and I think I have read in one of your provincial papers, that the charr of the Lake District was similarly imported.

PISCATOR. It is a popular notion that the monks were our great benefactors in this respect. It is a most easy way of explaining the fact — the spread of certain fish; and how can we gainsay it or prove a negative? That in some instances they may have introduced certain fish is highly probable; — but it does not thence follow that natural causes have not been in operation, effecting the same thing. And, if we enter fully and fairly into the subject, I think we must arrive at the conclusion

that these natural causes have been on the whole most potential. How often do we meet with rare species in situations where it is difficult to imagine that they owe their advent to the hand of man? Thus the charr is not only found in the lakes of the Lake District within sound of the abbey bell, but also in those of some of the wildest parts of Connemara and of the Scottish Highlands. A like remark applies to some of the Coregoni, such as the Schelly and Vendace. Popular notions I am disposed to hold always in doubt. How rude are they and often unfounded: the monks in many instances have taken the place of the giants. Think of the Fingalian roads, of the cave named after the same mythical hero, of the Giant's Causeway, and the like: natural effects referred to superhuman or supernatural agency!

AMICUS. You have just said that the ova are capable of retaining their vitality under the circumstances you described, provided they are tolerably advanced. Do you mean by that, their drawing near the time of being hatched? I should have supposed that it would have been the contrary,—that the simpler the structure of the ovum, the less would be the

danger of suffering from external agents,—the more retentive it would be of life, according to the analogy of seeds.

PISCATOR. According to another analogy and more akin, viz., that of young animals, especially of our own kind, the hold of life is least secure the earlier the age,—the most distant from the complete and complex structural development. To say nothing of abortions, how dreadful is the loss of life amongst infants when not tenderly cared for; and even with all possible care how much greater is the risk of a fatal termination of the same disease in the instance of the child than of the adult. But what I stated was not founded on analogy,—never to be trusted except as a guide to inquiry,—it is founded on carefully made experiments, and those of two kinds; one in which ova, after impregnation, were exposed in water to a temperature certain degrees above the natural hatching temperature of the breeding beds: another, in which they were sent packed in moist wool to considerable distances,—not less than 500 miles, or including their return not less than 1000, and on one occasion double that distance. The results of both accorded; the

ova of the earliest age were all killed in the trials; those most advanced, the oldest, mostly escaped with retention of life.*

AMICUS. Your experimental results are better than my analogical conjectures. Your opposite analogy would hardly have satisfied me, but your facts do completely. I shall take a note of them and hope to profit by them practically, that is, by introducing fish into waters seemingly fitted for them, such as the charr and the grayling, at present unknown in them.

PISCATOR. Such attempts are laudable, and in many instances, probably, will be rewarded with success; it is too much to expect that they will invariably be so; for, as with plants so with animals,—with fishes,—there are physical circumstances of locality difficult of appreciation, favourable and unfavourable, the effect of which can only be ascertained by actual experience; and which require to be taken into account in considering the distribution of species.

AMICUS. There is another point on which

* For an account of these experiments, see the "Philosophical Transactions," for 1856; and the "Proceedings of the Royal Society, vol. viii. p. 27.

perhaps you can enlighten me. In speaking of the ova of the Salmonidæ, when describing the production of the young fish, you have used the term hatching. Pray is it in the same sense as you would employ it, were you describing the chick breaking out from the imprisoning egg-shell? the word, as I understand it, meaning, in its radical sense, to break, and the chick in ovo effecting the breaking by means of its sharp-pointed, hammer-like, hard beak,—by a process of repeated tapping — a capital instance surely of instinctive action, and of a natural provision in such a beak for accomplishing it, especially considering that the hard horny point is cast off after it has done its work, — that is, when the chick is at large.

PISCATOR. I use the term in the same sense; for the egg-shell of the Salmonidæ and, I believe, of fish generally, is ruptured by the efforts of the young fish acting instinctively, somewhat, though not exactly, after the same manner as that practised by the chick in ovo.

AMICUS. How is it accomplished? I should like to know! Pray, tell me; for these first efforts of animals seem to me peculiarly interesting as pure examples of instinct.

PISCATOR. I will tell you as well as I can the little I know of the process collected from my own observations. The embryo fish undergoes development, gradually increasing in size from the absorption of the substance of the yolk, and the conversion of that substance into the substance of its various dissimilar organs. This is the most remarkable of metamorphoses. When near its full time, an absorption, I believe, of the shell commences and proceeds till rendered so thin as to be no longer able to resist the force acting on it within—that is, the efforts of the foetal fish. But as the foetus is folded in the egg so as to form nearly a circle, its muscular exertions to straighten itself, chiefly by the action of the tail, impel it forward, and the head being one of the firmest parts of the body, the probability is that the membrane will yield to it, and that the young fish will be impelled head foremost into its world of waters. Sometimes, as I have seen, the tail first appears; this is a mishap, and it may be of a fatal kind, for the tail being the chief moving power of the fish, its action, impelling forwards, tends rather to prevent than promote the extrication of the head. It is a somewhat curious sight to see

the young fish in this predicament, — its bulk being still within the shell, and the protruding tail so delicate as easily to escape observation when in motion; the appearance is as if the egg itself moved spontaneously.

AMICUS. You have made angling interesting to me, and, now,—I thank you for it,—you are doing the same for the breeding of fish; give me, if you please, a little further information on the matter. Tell me what is most essential for conducting the process with the best chance of a successful issue, and with the least trouble and the simplest means.

PISCATOR. You are easily answered. All that I have found necessary, whether in the instance of the ova of the charr, the salmon, or the minnow, have been pure water, changing it once a day, and clean vessels of glass or earthenware,—the size and volume of water in some proportion to the number of ova: if not exceeding half a dozen, a tumbler will suffice. The temperature is of less importance: if that of a room, with a fire in winter, so as to range from 45° to 55° , the hatching will be unduly early; if of a lower temperature, the hatching will be retarded; and the lower it is, the

greater will be the retardation ; in this respect, analogous to what occurs in vegetable life, in the case of germinating seeds.

AMICUS. You say nothing of gravel for a bed or of the exclusion of light,—the one and the other, noticeable, I think you have said, in the natural process.

PISCATOR. They may be useful though not essential in that process ; remember I am speaking of the artificial, and of the easiest mode, and most inviting way of conducting it. Try it, and be assured you will find it answer, and in the curious phenomena of young life and development it will exhibit, especially if you call in the aid of the microscope, it will most amply repay the little care and attention it may require.

AMICUS. Of what use is the gravel in the natural process, if not required in the artificial ?

PISCATOR. I believe it has a double use or more,—first, that of covering and protecting the ova during the foetal development ; and next, after their hatching, that of affording hiding places for the young fish, and the means of keeping themselves free of impurities by the friction which can hardly be avoided whilst

they are in motion amongst the gravel. I may mention that the surface of the fish, however young, is covered with mucus, apt by its adhesive quality to retain minute impurities, — vegetable and animal organisms and their semina, from which scarcely any water is absolutely free, and which growing, acting as parasites, may, if not rubbed off, have a fatal effect on the young fish.

AMICUS. Do not these impurities and parasitical growths collect chiefly about the gills in the instance of the young fish? If I recollect rightly, you have told me so.

PISCATOR. They do, and, I believe, for this reason, that the gills through which the water passes in the act of respiration, or the function of aeration of the blood analogous to it, perform the part of a filter catching at their outer margins and detaining the matters suspended in the water as impurities, — thereby proving a check on the flow of water, and the aeration depending on that flow. I have often examined with the microscope the obstructing adhering matter, and have found it commonly of a mixed nature, fibres of the simplest form of vegetation, — particles of soot entangled in them, and granules

and nuclei of various kinds. I may mention that, besides gravel, if you do not wish to restrict yourself to the simplest means, it may be of some advantage to put into the water, in the artificial process, some aquatic plants, which, in vegetating, may help to keep the water pure, and favour the increase of infusoria, the food of the young fish.

AMICUS. You have spoken of the interest attending the artificial process of hatching. Favour me, if you please, with some of the results of your experience, so that I may be able better to appreciate the interest.

PISCATOR. Perhaps you will not consider them in the relation so interesting as they appeared to me in the observation,—the interest in a thing happily increasing with the attention bestowed, often imparting a momentary importance to what, except to the actual observer, must seem trifling. But do not mistake me; do not suppose that I make the remark with any intent to undervalue minute observations. As to your request, let me recollect, for without reference to notes, the describing of observations of this kind tasks the memory. I had best begin again *ab ovo*.

In the artificial mode of breeding, when I have obtained ova from living fish, under water, and added to them milt in its milk-like state—also from living fish, and expressed under water—a certain number, and only a certain number, of these ova have become impregnated, and have been hatched; of the remainder, some have become opaque almost immediately from the absorption of water; and some, the larger proportion, have retained their transparency for a variable time; many of them more than a month. Why a portion should receive into their interior the spermatozoon, the impregnating particle, why others should so soon absorb water, and by the congelation of the yolk become opaque; and why another portion should resist so long the entrance of water without progressive development, at present, I believe, can only be conjectured. Next, of the impregnated ova: these, if carefully examined will be found to vary in size*; to be

* Of twelve mature ova of a salmon from the Dee, the heaviest weighed one grain and eight-tenths, the lightest one grain and two-tenths of a grain. The ova of the charr I have found to vary in diameter, from sixteen to twenty hundredths of an inch, and in weight from one grain to seven-tenths of a grain.

hatched at different times, even though kept in the same vessel and treated exactly alike; and the young fish likewise to differ in size, in activity and in strength. In the instance of the ova of salmon, I have witnessed in the time of hatching, under the same circumstances, a difference of seventeen days; and in that of the charr a difference of ten days and more, with a slight variation of circumstances, such as a difference of two or three degrees of temperature. Further, as regards the absorption or consumption of the yolk, by which, for a certain time the young fish are supported, that too in different individuals is variable in point of time. Such variations at first, may seem somewhat startling, but when we consider the course of nature generally, it seems rather in accordance with that course; her laws, especially in regard to living beings, having a certain latitude, exceeding commonly our idea of them. It is well to keep this in mind; it may help to explain and reconcile disputed points and differences of opinion, as, for instance, regarding the time that elapses between the hatching of the ova of the salmon and the migration of the salmon fry to the sea.

AMICUS. Your remarks remind me of the account I have lately read, of the results of an experiment recently made on the artificial breeding of the salmon, at Stormontfield, on the Tay, how some of the young fish assumed the silvery scale, became smelts, and migrated the first year; whilst others continued parrs, and did not assume the smelt state till the following year, when in turn they also sought the sea.

PISCATOR. Those results are instructive; they help to reconcile the apparently conflicting observations of Messrs. Young and Shaw. It has been made a question whether the fry that migrated the second year were in reality hatched at the same time as those which took their seaward departure twelve months earlier — on the supposition that parr of the year following might possibly find their way into the pond; but, from all I have been able to learn, there is no good ground whatever for the suspicion, inasmuch as the water, the feeder of the pond, passes through a bank of gravel, excluding thereby the idea of any such error. In reasoning, perhaps, on these matters, we are too apt under the influence of ana-

logies, to create difficulties for ourselves. Regardless of that latitude already alluded to, fixing more the attention on the periodical changes of animals of the higher classes, we are too apt to presume there is the same regularity in the changes of the lower; but this does not necessarily follow: on the contrary, the lower we descend in the scale of beings, the wider, I apprehend, will be the range of time for the metamorphosis to which the several species are subject. In the instance of the frog, to give an example, I have known the change from the tadpole to the perfect animal arrested for many weeks, when the supply of food has been scanty. Recurring to the Stormontfield experiment, may it not be inferred that those which migrated first, were probably those of greatest vigour, and had the lion's share of food; and *vice versâ* of those remaining?

AMICUS. You spoke of the interest in the inquiry being increased, by bringing into use the microscope.

PISCATOR. And to an almost unlimited degree; indeed, I believe that the subject—the microscopic examination of the embryo

fish in its progress — might occupy one's whole life without being exhausted, so wonderful, mysterious, and complicated are the changes which take place in the course of the organic development. Even to the superficial observer the phenomena cannot fail of being interesting, such as the heart in its action, the circulation of the blood in its vessels, the change of form of the blood corpuscles from circular as is their outline in the embryo, to elliptical, as they are in the fully formed young fish, — such, moreover, as the advanced state of some of the organs at an early period, the eyes and pectoral fins, for example, and the late production of others, the dorsal and abdominal fins, for instance, the scales, its defensive armour, which are but slowly formed, no traces of them existing in the foetal fish. Even, in what is abnormal, there is an interest; as in animals of higher organisation, so in these, — occasionally marks of imperfect or partially arrested development may be witnessed; thus, I have seen a young salmon, destitute entirely of eyes, otherwise on quitting the egg well formed, and at the same time active, and

as well as I could judge, with instinctive habits, the same as if it had perfect vision.

AMICUS. If leisure permit, there is nothing I should like better than the pursuit you speak of. And since, under your guidance, I have become an angler, I will not despair of the higher calling.

PISCATOR. And rest assured you will be well repaid. The building up of an organic being, is one of the most wonderful of works; nowhere is design more manifestly exhibited, and the fine adaptation of means to ends. I will mention one example. The young of the salmon, of the Salmonidæ, and indeed of fish generally, on quitting the egg, carry with them a load, a liberal supply of aliment in the yolk sac attached to them, on which, in their feeble state, they feed by an act, not of eating, but of absorption; thereby losing weight; thereby becoming lighter, less encumbered, and fitter for action. Comparing the young fish on quitting the egg with one six weeks old, just when the vitelline sac — the store of food it brings with it — has disappeared, removed by absorption, I have found a diminution of weight equal to forty per cent. ; and this, accom-

panied with a marvellous increase of energy and activity, fitting the young fish to provide for itself; and, remember that this change from comparative indolence to vigorous exertion follows change of season, the hatching being at a time when the water is cold, and insects and all kinds of food are scarce; the stage of activity, when the spring is commencing, and food of a suitable kind is becoming plentiful. Can you wish for, or imagine a more striking instance of adaptation?

AMICUS. It is, indeed, admirable! If there be "sermons in stones," what theology is there not, what evidences of Natural Religion are there not in the ovum, and its living products!



COLLOQUY VIII.

*St. John's Vale. — Memorabilia by the Way :
varied Discussion.*

PISCATOR.



THIS fine April morning is tempting ; the wind from the south-west and warm ; the streams in good condition, clearing after the late rains. Let us lose no time. With your leave — and you have placed yourself under my guidance, whilst you are my guest — we will mount our ponies and proceed to the Vale of St. John. We shall have a chance of some small angling sport, and the certainty at least of a most pleasant ride.

AMICUS. Now we are on our way, if you please, remember that I am almost a stranger here ; so point out, I pray, whatever things you think interesting and worthy of note ; and, I

am sure there must be many such, when I call to mind the charm of immortal verse, and that hereabouts was the abode of the charmer.

PISCATOR. I will attend to your request; for what is pleasanter than to relate to another, a friend, what is interesting to oneself? I may begin even on starting. You see how good this turnpike road is leading to Rydal and Grasmere, and yet it is little beyond the memory of man when it was first made passable for carriages, or even carts. A worthy yeomen of the former place has told me that he knew the labourer, who was one of those first employed in making a cart-road between Grasmere and Ambleside, a man who died only about fifteen years ago; and, in Clark's account of the district, written little more than sixty years ago, he describes how, before the turnpike road was in being, a causeway was begun between Rydal Hall and Ambleside, not by means of ordinary labour, but by that of schoolboys and their master. Every Thursday and Saturday afternoon Mr. Bell, the master, and his scholars gave themselves to the work, they gathering and bringing the stones, he paving with them.

AMICUS. What you mention is indicative of a

rude and primitive state, difficult now to realize, especially in sight of that large white house of modern aspect. Is it Rydal Hall? The scenery around it is worthy of a more picturesque building.

PISCATOR. It is; and that woodland is Rydal forest; a familiar haunt of Wordsworth. Some day we must have a ramble in it. I can point out to you many of his favourite old trees, oaks of a goodly size, the largest hardly inferior in stateliness to the Lord's Oak which we are now under; and, do observe it, for it is an arboretum, so to speak, in itself, from the many plants which have taken root and are growing on it, not only ferns, mosses and lichens, but likewise the holly, the yew and the ash. We must have a walk too through the grounds, and see the pretty falls. The stream that makes them we have just crossed as it flows meandering through the park to join the Rothay. It takes its rise in Fairfield, that fine mountain ridge, above 2000 feet in height, which, you may observe, screens Rydal from the north, and is still crested with snow. The beck, to use the Dale-idiom, is a charming mountain stream in its upland part, and not without trout.

Some fine day, rod in hand, we must follow it up—or better down, as the Poet sings—

“Down Rydal cove from Fairfield’s side.”

There, though so near the busy haunts of man, you will find perfect seclusion, and all, or almost all, you could wish to have in solitude;—in brief, it is the counterpart of Far-Easedale with an improvement, a lighter and fresher air, from being more elevated, and more extended, and having a finer prospect, Windermere being seen in the distance; on which account the following it down deserves the preference.

AMICUS. Had you not directed my attention to the oak which you call the Lord’s Oak, I infer, from its superior magnitude, the parasitical growths you pointed out would have escaped my notice. You did not mention the mistletoe as one of them—that true parasite.

PISCATOR. It is somewhat remarkable, that in a district such as this, in which, probably owing to the quantity of rain that falls, adventitious growths are far from uncommon on the older trees, the mistletoe is unknown; and I believe the few attempts that have been made to introduce it, have, with one exception, failed

of success ; and yet we know not why ; *à priori*, one would say, that a plant which is even too common in Monmouthshire and Herefordshire could not be rare in Westmoreland ; but, in truth, advanced as botanical science is, there is little known as to the habitats of plants in the way of idiosyncrasy and causation.

AMICUS. This little village of Rydal delights me ;—its situation, its neatness, the happy admixture of the lowly cottage and substantial dwelling, with its becoming chapel, all so accordant ! What is its history, if history it has ?

PISCATOR. It is almost entirely a dependance of the adjoining Hall, and a good example of the feudal dependency mitigated by modern usage. The cottages are occupied chiefly by old servants, they and their houses older than the chapel, which, as you may judge from its style, is a modern erection. You will find its story in two interesting poems of Wordsworth dedicated to it, and in one of them an explanation at once poetical, and I believe true, of the direction, pointing to the east,

“ That symbol of day-spring from on high,”

of our sacred buildings.

AMICUS. Whose is this cottage *ornée*, skirting the village? There is nothing feudal in its appearance.

PISCATOR. It too has its history. It is a creation of fine taste, and has been the residence of a succession of men of cultivated tastes, Rydal Mount, rising above and contiguous to it, no doubt the attraction, with its own special beauty. Its first inmates were men who, at the end of the last war, not the Crimean, laid by the sword and here courted the Muses. Here the translator of Camoens, of whom I have before made mention as a friend and an angler, enjoyed a few short years of domestic happiness, too soon interrupted by the loss of his wife, in a most distressing way, from her dress taking fire. His successor, the graceful narrator of his campaigns and travels, owed his removal to a happier cause, not the disruption but the accomplishment of a union with an amiable woman; and his successor again, a man the whole tenor of whose life has been peace, one of the Society of Friends, makes the spot his occasional retreat, not unmindful of the Muses. We are approaching Nab Scar. Do you see that cottage by the roadside? It too

is not without fame. There lived, and there died a man of genius,—the son of a man of genius, gifted intellectually almost like his father, and even more infirm of purpose.

AMICUS. You speak of Hartley Coleridge. Alack! Alack! That so much power should have been combined with so much weakness. It reminds me of an early pathetic letter I have seen of his father's, written when the son was a joyous boy. His words were "There *is* a something, an essential something wanting in me. I feel it, *I know* it, though what it is, I cannot but guess. I have read somewhere that in the tropical climates there are annuals of as ample girth as forest trees; so, by a very dim likeness, I seem to myself to distinguish power from strength and to have only the power."

PISCATOR. A curious and melancholy psychological condition, and yet I dare say true.

AMICUS. What loud harsh note was that? It seems to come from yonder wooded islet.

PISCATOR. It is the cry of the heron. This beautiful little lake Rydalmere, is the sole property of the lady of the manor; and under protection a few herons, here secure from mo-

lestation, yearly build their nests in those Scotch firs, and at this season add an interest to the spot.

AMICUS. Pray, how lies the road to Grasmere? Rydalmere seems to be shut in almost as much above as below by the approaching mountain abutments.

PISCATOR. There are, and it may surprise you, three roads to Grasmere, — the upper, the first made and the most rugged; the middle, an improvement on that; and the lower, the present turnpike road, as good as you could wish, the three well marking advancing improvement. As we have a choice, we will take the middle way,—not as tutissimè, though safe it is, but as jucundissimè.

AMICUS. And now we are well on it, most pleasant it is. Rydalmere so delectable in one direction to look down upon, and Grasmere in the other. How fine is the effect of the green islet with its clump of dark firs, — it, and the surrounding hills reflected from the mirror face of the calm lake. Does the mere derive its name from its colouring?

PISCATOR. You are far off the mark. What think you of the wild boar giving it a name?

It was formerly written Gresmere, sometimes Grismere; and *grise* being the old name of the wild swine, the derivation I hope you receive as unobjectionable. What renders it not improbable is, that the country round in the olden time was covered with wood, and wild boar abounded here. There is a saying in accordance, that once the squirrel could travel from Kendal to Keswick without once touching the ground.

AMICUS. On the islet, under the shade of the firs, I see a house, but without windows; yet of stone and strongly built. What is it?

PISCATOR. A hog-house; a shelter, however, not for swine, but sheep. It, as his verses tell us, was once a favourite haunt of the Poet:—

Hither does a poet sometimes row
His pinnacle, a small vagrant barge up-piled
With plenteous stores of heath and withered fern,
(A lading which he with his sickle cuts
Among the mountains,) and beneath this roof,
He makes his summer couch, and here at noon
Spreads out his limbs, while yet, unshorn, the sheep,
Panting beneath the burden of their wool,
Lie round him, even as they were a part
Of his own household: nor, while from his bed

He looks through the open door-place toward the lake,
 And to the stirring breezes, does he want
 Creations lovely as the work of sleep,
 Fair sights and visions of romantic joy."

Ah ! here we are at the "Wishing-Gate," another object of the poet's regard, so well testified when he mourned in verse (happily labouring under a mistake) "The Wishing-Gate destroyed," — verse as amiable as philosophical, and I may add moral ; one stanza I will repeat to you,—

"Not fortune's slave is man : our state
 Enjoins, while firm resolves await
 On wishes just and wise,
 That strenuous action follow both,
 And life be one perpetual growth
 Of heaven-ward enterprise."

AMICUS. This, a spot commanding a scene of so much beauty, one that might so occupy and charm the senses and delight the mind, is the last I should expect that would be chosen for wishing ! But in this even we may find a moral.

PISCATOR. Presently we shall come in sight of the poet's first abode in the Lake District ;— a house known before (as if auspicious of its coming inmates) by the sign of "The Dove

and Olive-Bough.”* There it is, with its little orchard rising above it. There began his married life; there, probably, he passed some of his happiest days, in “Plain living and high thinking.” Would that we had a faithful account of this portion of his life! How interesting would it be and instructive,—a model kind of life, in its simplicity, frugality and dignity, and I am sure I may add, in true enjoyment. With a very limited income,—limited we have been told to a hundred a-year†—yet he exercised hospitality. Here he had for his guests, men whose names will go down with his to after times,—Southey, Coleridge, Lamb, Scott,—not to mention others of hardly less mark. Plain living indeed was theirs, and high thinking. Wine or beer never appeared

* “There, where the Dove and Olive Bough
Once hung, a poet harbours now,
A simple water-drinking bard.”

The Waggoner, Canto I.

† The means of the poet at the outset of his marriage life were so limited, owing in part to an unsettled account, and unpaid debt due to the family from a noble lord, whose agent Mr. Wordsworth’s father had been, and which was not paid till the late Lord Lonsdale came to the title and property. See *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 88.

at his table. Water or tea was their symposial beverage.

AMICUS. What you say reminds me of a little anecdote, which I have read, — how Sir Walter Scott, a man of more luxurious habits, when a guest of Wordsworth, not satisfied with such a paradisaical mode of living, after his dinner, was wont to resort to the public-house for a draught of home-brewed; and, at the same time, to avoid giving offence, would say he was going to take a meditative stroll.

PISCATOR. And, one day walking earlier than usual, with his friend, and coming to the inn, he was addressed by the publican, “Ay, Master Scott! you are early to-day for your drink,” thus disclosing the secret. So runs the story, does it not?

AMICUS. Precisely so. Is it not true?

PISCATOR. It is one of the many stories that might be true, but are not true. It was the invention of an author who too often did not distinguish between the creations of his fancy and the realities occurring around him; and by fine writing and a happy style, always gave the air of truth to his narrative. Scott, I know, once only, and for a day, visited Words-

worth whilst residing here, and then in company with Davy; it was the day they ascended Helvellyn together.

AMICUS. It little imports, whether true or false. The incidents of such a life are of minor interest. His poetry, I apprehend, reflects his mode of life.

PISCATOR. Just so. It was his wish that his life should be read in his writings; he desired no other biography. Many things said of him had better been left unsaid, such as have been given to the world with no kindly feeling towards a man to whom we owe so much; and, more objectionable still, such as have been founded in error, as the statement derived from the writer just mentioned, that he was reserved and close in conversation, — that he was slovenly and had little regard for order in his dealings with books; — instead of which, I can assure you, he was more than commonly orderly and careful about books; and in conversation, open and confiding, giving utterance to his thoughts — to compare him to a gushing spring — as they welled up in his mind.

AMICUS. I remember the charges, and am glad to hear them rebutted. I think I have somewhere read of his cutting the leaves of a

costly new work he found on a friend's table with a knife smeared with butter.

PISCATOR. Just so; and the friend, the narrator! How often has the exclamation been made "Oh! save me from my friends!" It is possible that the poet may have done what is reported of him; but who that knew him well would have any hesitation in declaring that it was done inadvertently. I have been favoured, as a neighbour, with books from his library (he had a goodly collection of books, though they were not his pride, after the manner of Southey), and never did I find one of them in a state otherwise than denoting proper care. Some of them, from their peculiar binding—done in the house when under the influence of the *res angusta*—were not a little interesting and curious, their covering being printed cotton; and pleasant were they to look at, and in cold weather, pleasant were they to handle, from their soft feel and absence of chill. They were called by the ladies, whose handy work they were, "The Cottonian Library."

AMICUS. I suppose, it was from hence that he went forth in the wain with wife and children, driven by a serving maid, —

“Something in the guise
Of those old patriarchs, when from well to well,
They roamed through wastes where now the tented
Arabs dwell,”

as related in the charming descriptive epistle addressed to his friend Sir George Beaumont.

PISCATOR. It was from Grasmere that he set out in that primitive style, but not from the cottage at Townend; I believe it was from Allan Bank, that larger house you see yonder, conspicuous under those dark crags, for the verses to which you allude bear the date of 1811; and he informs us in his brief, too brief, autobiography that he changed his abode to Allan Bank in the spring of 1808. Undoubtedly, his manner of life, as you remark, is portrayed in his poetry, that is, partially; how can it be otherwise? The words I have quoted, and to which I like to return, are, as you may remember, from a noble outbreak of feeling worthy of Milton. I will repeat them to you. Their being written in London, and in 1802, will account for the outbreak.

“O friend! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being as I am opprest,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show: mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom! We must run glittering like a brook

In open sunshine, or we are unblest :
The wealthiest man among us is the best :
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry ; and these we adore :
Plain living and high thinking are no more :
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone ; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws."

AMICUS. And, I would repeat to you, were I not sure that you know it, the sonnet that follows, addressed to Milton, one of that stirring series dedicated to national independence and liberty, not uncalled for at the time, — a time of inglorious peace, of prostration to despotic power in the first Napoleon, not unlike that witnessed at present in the person of his successor.

PISCATOR. And would that we had a like poet to address us in the same stirring language, to warn us of impending danger, and recall our thoughts to better things than military glory. But a truce to these reflections. Here we are on the beaten turnpike, and there is Dunmail-raise before us, and there is Grasmere Church. You must see its interior ; it is so near that a quarter of an hour will suffice for the deviation.

AMICUS. And here we are in the church-yard; and here, shaded by yew and sycamore, is the poet's earthly resting place; children, sisters, friends, congregated around him; —

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

the sole inscription on his simple head-stone. Now, let us enter the church. So, that is his mural monument.

PISCATOR. Read the inscription. I will not ask whether you like it or not; for it is not for criticism, it is too sacred for that; you will, I am sure, agree with me as to its truthfulness.

TO THE MEMORY

OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH,

A TRUE PHILOSOPHER AND POET,
WHO BY SPECIAL GIFT AND CALLING OF ALMIGHTY GOD,
WHETHER HE DISCOURSED ON MAN OR NATURE,
FAILED NOT TO LIFT UP THE HEART TO HOLY THINGS,
TIRED NOT OF MAINTAINING THE CAUSE OF THE
POOR AND SIMPLE;
AND, SO, IN PERILOUS TIMES WAS RAISED UP
TO BE A CHIEF MINISTER, NOT ONLY OF NOBLEST POETRY,
BUT OF HIGH AND SACRED TRUTH.

And pray read what is below.

THIS MEMORIAL IS PLACED HERE BY HIS FRIENDS AND
NEIGHBOURS, IN TESTIMONY OF RESPECT, AFFECTION, AND
GRATITUDE.

Of the friends, I may mention many were Americans of the United States: a noble fellowship, and may we not hope a pledge of enduring union? Now let us hasten away. That house within its garden, which we are passing, is the Rectory, where the poet lived two years, between his leaving Allan Bank and his taking up his residence at Rydal Mount.

AMICUS. That Rydal Mount in its beauty so fit for a poet's living residence, as the spot where he lies interred is for his grave! What a place of pilgrimage it will be, and his grave too, to all true admirers of genuine poetry and beautiful nature! The road you have brought me, seems to me, as it were a *via sacra*, full of memorabilia and of a worthy kind and pleasure-able in reflection.

PISCATOR. I cannot say so without reserve. Before we ascended the hill leading to the "Wishing-Gate," where the rock has been broken up in working a quarry, a spot of wildness and confusion in its littered heaps of stones and neglected culture,—a spot,—the ground being common, where many a tramping party has spent the night, and crime has been committed, I can tell nothing of but evil;—the locality

seems as if it were cursed. In the solitary cottage by the road side a man hanged himself; and just opposite, where there is the ruin of another cottage, a like act was perpetrated before the dwelling was deserted. It is too much to expect in our pilgrimage on earth, however favoured the region, to find it an Eden, that is, in its primitive blissfulness. Pray excuse the shade which I have thrown into your sunshine. Here is Dunmail-raise: and now we are in Cumberland. That pile of stones marks the boundary of the two counties and a memorable event,—the end of the aboriginal British sway, in the time of the Saxon king Edmund, by whom the native chief was here defeated and slain: you will find notice of it in Wordsworth's "Waggoner," that picturesque descriptive poem, a mixture of the comic and pathetic, describing to the life an unhappy waggon journey, and the end of the grand old commodious waggon and team.

AMICUS. A fit place for battle, rout and slaughter, as "White-Moss," as I think you called the last-mentioned ill-favoured spot, is for acts of violence. This liminary spot, with the

wild fells on each side, is little inferior to Kirkstore in savage grandeur.

PISCATOR. It is indeed a wild pass; and here the waters divide. That little stream is the infant Rothay; and that other descends to Wythburn, and is one of the principal feeders of Thirlmere. Both take their rise in the "mighty Helvellyn," the vast mountain mass which we see rising on our right.

AMICUS. Cultivation is again appearing. I see a few houses, and lo! there is a little chapel, almost rivalling that of Wasdale-head in smallness, and built after the same model, with its adjunct (the two emblematic of good and evil) the public house.*

PISCATOR. See the long line of lake is opening out before us. Yonder is Eagle, or, more correctly, Glimmer-crag, Crag of the Ewe-lamb, and yonder is Raven-crag; and there is "the Rock of Names."

AMICUS. What mean you by that, "the Rock of Names?"

PISCATOR. Stop and look. What see you on that perpendicular face?

* "The Horse," late "The Nag's Head;" later, when "The Waggoner" was written, "The Cherry Tree."

AMICUS. I see well cut in goodly and conspicuous letters W. W. and others.*

PISCATOR. They were cut by the hand of the poet, and long may they be preserved in *memoriam*, in accordance with the poet's wishes and hopes as expressed in the lines written respecting this rock, ending

——“fail not, thou loved rock ! to keep
Thy charge when we are laid asleep.”†

I heard a dear friend of his say, that the rock was pointed out to him by Wordsworth himself, and with a fond earnestness, showing regard. They two walked from Rydal Mount here, expressly for the purpose of seeing it. Mark well the spot ; how it is close to the road on our right, and nearly in a line with the head of the lake.

AMICUS. I do ; and I join heartily in your wish for its preservation. To appreciate the

* The other initials are,

M. W., Mary Wordsworth.

D. W., Dorothy Wordsworth.

S. T. C., Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

J. W., John Wordsworth.

S. H., Sarah Hutchinson.

See *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 310.

† See Notes to the Eighth Edition of Poems. London, 1845, p. 538.

value of such a relic, an autograph on an enduring rock, and that rock a chosen one in a choice spot, one should imagine how it will be valued, should it be spared, centuries hence ! Had we the initials of Shakespeare or of Milton thus inscribed, how inestimable would they be !

PISCATOR. As I have what is notable to point out to you on our way, know that this road we have travelled, was travelled yearly and for many a year by Dalton to ascend Helvellyn in the cause of science. There he had a rain-gauge, the first, I believe, ever brought into the district ; it was used in prosecution of those meteorological researches, on which and on his atomic theory his well earned reputation as an original inquirer chiefly rests.

AMICUS. How pleasant is this road : the rich furze in bloom on the fell scenting the mild breeze ; the dark waters delicately rippled, reflecting the hues rather than the forms of the girding hills ; and those in advance not without the ornament of wood.

PISCATOR. We are now fast approaching the vale of St. John ; one ascent more, and you will see it.

AMICUS. A noble and beautiful prospect !

PISCATOR. Observe that rocky eminence standing out from the hill, of a somewhat castellated form, and in a misty state of the air, with refracted lights, if there happen to be gleams of sunshine, having a greater resemblance to a baronial stronghold. See in it the magical towers of romance, at times appearing and at times disappearing, as so picturesquely described by the latest Wizard of the North.

AMICUS. A curious delusion ! But how often are we cheated by our senses, without the pleasure of a resulting romance !

PISCATOR. Here we leave the high road. This on our right, which we are now entering, will lead us to a hamlet, where in a steddung belonging to an honest "statesman," the proprietor of some twenty acres, which he himself farms, we can put up our ponies ; and after our day's fishing return to and refresh ourselves with what provisions we have brought in our baskets. The river is close to the house, and the best part for angling.

AMICUS. I hope your friend is a credit to the name.

PISCATOR. He is an honest industrious fellow ; would that all statesmen were ! neighbourly

and kind hearted, and his wife equally so. I have never found them idle, and always found them ready to give me shelter. Here we are at his gate. His dogs sound the alarm; and behold the man himself!

AMICUS. What a Hercules! and what an honest open face! indeed, as to frame and looks, he is a good specimen of a Cumberland yeoman.

PISCATOR. Now our ponies are taken care of, let us to the river, and there part for a time, to meet here not later than six; and, that you may have a remembrancer, I have put under the care of the good woman of the house what we brought with us; and have had her word that some potatoes shall be ready for us at that hour.

AMICUS. Here are stepping-stones almost under water, and so distant from each other, and so rough and uneven, that it must be a bold and active person to use them for crossing. What a charming stream, and what noble heights near and distant! Pray what flies had I better use?

PISCATOR. Small and bright ones; for our fishing to-day must be fine; and as much for

smolts or smelts, as the salmon-fry ready to migrate are called here, as for trout. And, that you may not be disappointed, pray consider angling secondary to seeing the vale and having the enjoyment of exercise in the open air, and by the river side in this pleasant weather. You, if you please, follow the stream; I will take the contrary course.

AMICUS. I have come in before you, having had but little success, and finding that the valley became tamer the farther I went. You had prepared me for little angling sport, and it could hardly have been worse; for I have taken only four smolts and two small trouts. Nevertheless, I have passed the time not unpleasantly; besides now and then stopping at a farm house, the two or three that were near the river, for curiosity sake, I rested awhile to indulge the same feeling in examining my captured fish. Of the smolts, two I found were males and two females; the milts in the former were very narrow, as if shrunk, after having been emptied of their fluid contents; the roes in the latter were very small and granular. The largest of

The four was seven inches in length, and was very salmon-like in form ; the smallest was only four inches. Well fed and fat, their scales were loose and easily detached, and very silvery from much lustrous matter deposited on their inner surface. The transverse markings had nearly disappeared ; but when the scales were removed, they were to be seen, though less distinct than in the parr, indicating some absorption of the colouring matter.

PISCATOR. These your observations accord with mine, tending to prove that the silvery scales you speak of are new ones ; and that they hide the markings in the true skin, partly from being less transparent than the old, owing to a thicker deposit of pearly or nacreous matter on their inner surface, and partly to the markings themselves having faded a little, and it may be, as you say, from absorption. The nacreous matter, I may observe, is easily detached by rubbing the scales with water in a mortar. If you compare the quantity obtained from parr scales and smolt scales, you will be satisfied how great is the preponderance of this matter in the latter.

AMICUS. Is what you call nacreous matter the same as that used to make Roman pearls?

PISCATOR. It is the same, obtained from white fish, such as the bleak, white-baite, roach and dace applied to glass. You will find the method described in Mr. Yarrell's "*History of British Fishes.*" The same matter is used by the Chinese in their drawings; by means of it they impart to the coloured figures of fishes a perfectly natural silvery gloss worthy of imitation by our artists.

AMICUS. Now, tell me, if you please, what has been your success.

PISCATOR. Much on a par with yours. I have taken only a few smelts, and a few trout, neither worth mentioning. I have had a very pleasant ramble too; and have got, as I hope you have, a good appetite. See, the table is laid, and the potatoes are on it, and smoking by the side of our cold meat and fruit pasties.

AMICUS. These potatoes are excellent: so mealy and dry! How have they been dressed?

PISCATOR. There is the cooking utensil still on the fire,—an iron crock with an iron cover; and in the way it is used serving as an oven. —

You see peats are placed above as well as below.

AMICUS. I see; and can readily understand that it is applicable to many uses. How useful it might be to a colonist!

PISCATOR. And what an excellent colonist would this our friend the statesman make, and the like of him, accustomed as he is to hardy life and able to turn his hand to many things; leading with his wife, as nearly as it is possible in a civilised country, a life akin to that of the colonist.

AMICUS. And what an excellent soldier too he would make for the same reasons, — so self-relying and self-dependent, as well as strong and active.

PISCATOR. In the olden time, the yeomanry of the country formed the greater part of the body of our armies; whilst now it is chiefly composed of men brought up in our manufactories and almost unacquainted with rural life and its various occupations; and hence their helplessness in the field and that inferiority in providing for and taking care of themselves as compared with foreign troops, especially the French. A general now-a-day could not

address his men preparing for the storm—such as that of the Redan—after the manner of Shakespear in “Henry V.”

“And you, good yeomen,
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
The mettle of your pasture.”

Another advantage attending yeomen soldiers was that at the end of the war they resumed with their return home their home occupations, like the Romans in the best time of the Republic.

Now let us to horse; it is time to be starting on our return. The moon is up; so we shall have the advantage of its light.

You spoke just now of having looked into some farm houses, indulging your curiosity: now we are on our way, pray tell me the impression you received? It is well to know what a stranger observes.

AMICUS. All I have seen to day, both in the houses I looked into and that one in which we were so kindly received, accord with my former experience,—the experience of last autumn. Within, I observed the same neatness, cleanliness and order; without, a somewhat careless agriculture and a total neglect of horticulture.

Not a cultivated flower have I seen to-day since we crossed Dunmail-raise, nor a garden vegetable and *à fortiori*, not a garden. Why this neglect?

PISCATOR. The tastes of men are more or less acquired; and happy favouring circumstances seem to be required to form the more delicate and refined taste. This I mention in relation to flower-gardens. As to the neglect of kitchen-gardens, may it not be said, that they imply a certain opulence, and if not luxury, certainly a degree of comfort in the way of living hardly to be found in a poor mountainous district such as this? Moreover its being a pastoral district greatly stands in the way of horticulture of any kind; it would be difficult for a farmer here to defend a garden-plot from the incursions and depredations of his stock, especially his sheep, which, when pressed by hunger in the spring hardly any ordinary wall will keep out. Remember, no pastoral people have been an horticultural people; the two occupations are in a manner incompatible; from Holy Writ we learn that they were separated from the commencement.

AMICUS. Yet agriculture is not so incom-

patible with pastoral life; on the contrary, in its improved state a union of the two is required.

PISCATOR. Truly, in its improved state; but that is not the condition of farming in this district, in which the holdings are commonly small and the farmers without capital whether of money or knowledge. Look at their dung-heaps exposed to the action of the heavy rains, washing out their richest portion, and you need not look further to be convinced at least of their want of the more precious article.

AMICUS. On this little fishing excursion how sparing ⁴has been our conversation on fishing. Let me ask a question about it: Why is it that you have not proposed trying the lakes we have passed; first Rydalmere, next Grasmere, and last Thirlmere, which, from their situation and character as pieces of water, I should suppose would abound in fish.

PISCATOR. Simply because I could not promise you sport in them. In each of them there are pike as well as trout; and that may be one and probably is the chief cause that angling is bad in them. Rydal lake and Thirlmere are both tolerably preserved; and as the trout

in them are of excellent quality, it seems more than probable that were it not for the pike — that most voracious of fishes — they would soon be plentiful. Another cause, in addition, operates in Grasmere — it is over fished, and another, that the lath or otter is used in it, as it is also, though in a less degree, in the others. See, the descending moon is not far above the mountain ridge; we must quicken our speed, or we shall lose the benefit of her light, — and how charming is it in its mysterious effects. A canter, where we can canter, is advisable, both to escape the dark and to counteract the chilling effect of the night air. *Allon's.*



COLLOQUY IX.

The Duddon and its course.

AMICUS.



HERE shall our next angling excursion be? I hope to the Duddon; that river so well sung by the poet.

PISCATOR. Your wish is my law. Let it be to the Duddon, "that cloud-born stream," and that you may see it well, we will ascend to its birth-place, and follow it downwards. *Carpe diem* should be the angler's motto, and in more senses than one; so, if you please, we will presently set out. In half an hour we shall be able to make our preparations and have our horses ready. We will not go by the beaten way, but by the pleasantest,—as the seeing the country will be as much an object in this excursion as in our last to the vale of St. John.

AMICUS. The half-hour is hardly ended and we are in our saddles. What alacrity, when what is agreeable is before us! And, this indeed promises to be a pleasant day:—the wind is again from the right quarter, mild and fragrant, stealing sweets from your sweetbriar hedge and the violets, your garden violets, beneath it. Again, if you please, as we proceed, point out to me what you think worthy of notice. I have almost forgotten what I saw last year, when we went to Santon Bridge.

PISCATOR. That I will do with pleasure. And now we are leaving the village, pray be observant of our new church, so finely and well situated both for picturesque effect and convenience of access. I hope you admire its form, and do not object to its lofty, massive and conspicuous spire. Next Sunday, you must see its interior, and those offerings which it holds to the memory of the poet and his family, which, whatever may be their artistic value, I am sure will please you, as indicative of grateful feeling. To prepare you for what you will see, I may mention that they are the windows of painted glass, of which I spoke to you before,—one is to Wordsworth, one to

his sister Dorothy and his sister-in-law, Miss Hutchinson, and one to his daughter, and *in futuro*, long may it be so, to Mrs. Wordsworth: *Veritas*, the family motto, over each. How befitting it is that these the female members of his family should be thus remembered can be duly appreciated only by those who are aware of what he owed to them,—the beneficial influence they shed around his home, the help, the comfort, the happiness he derived from their ministering. They indeed were everything to him. In his writings full justice perhaps has been done to his charming sister; but less so to his hardly less deserving sister-in-law,—a woman of most upright mind and vigorous intellect. It was from her, I may tell you, that he acquired his knowledge of the noble character of the Pedlar*, the travelling merchant of the olden time, the chief personage in the “Excursion.” The character was a real one. It had fallen to her lot to have been

* See note to the “Excursion,” with an extract from Heron’s “Journey in Scotland,” vol. i. p. 89, descriptive of the estimation in which the business of the pedlar was formerly held.

brought up in the family of such a one, who after the earning of a little independence by carrying a pack, sat down in Kendal, opening a shop, and on his knee there she heard related the incidents of his wanderings. To explain how this happened to her, I should mention that she was one of a large family of children that became scattered owing to the early death of their parents; and so scattered was taken in charge by a relation to whom the good pedlar was married. I have called him noble; he truly belonged, as the poet has it, to "the aristocracy of Nature," and on that sole account was so courageously signalled out to be the leading and chief person in the poem.

AMICUS. These particulars are interesting; they are new to me and I thank you for them.

PISCATOR. Now we have crossed the Rothay and are near the Brathay, observe that château-like house on the right, so like a Swiss country seat. It is Croft Lodge; a pleasant dwelling, under the shelter of Loughrigg. Wealth has created it; the wealthy hitherto have possessed it; wealth gained in trade or business, and it has had many inconstant occu-

piers, charmed with its beauties, and after a while growing tired of them ; reminding me of a saying " that many fall in love with the district, but that few marry it." The present proprietor, however, I trust, will prove himself an exception.

AMICUS. And why not the enduring tie, where there is so much and varied beauty and so many facilities of living ?

PISCATOR. Beauty that pleases the eye, and even delights the mind, is not in itself all sufficient, at least in scenery. Here tedium is unavoidable after a while, unless a person has, as the saying is, " resources in himself,"— unless he can find himself occupation, and that in good part in-door occupation, such as science or literature affords. Even the mere country gentlemen may weary here,— the fishing is so indifferent, the shooting worse, and the hunting almost a farce, or a tremendous labour — the one to those who look on, the other to those who follow on foot in a country of stone walls, mountains and precipices, in which a man must make his own legs his hunter.

AMICUS. There is reason in what you say,

and I shall endeavour to remember it, and let any friend of mine, desirous of settling here, have the benefit of your experience. The river we are now come to I recognise again as the Brathay. How charming it is in its long reach, in its varied aspect of pool and rapid, with so many accompaniments of beauty, and especially the terminating mountains, rising like towers—*aeræ arces*—in the distance,—and, by the bye, they are very like in form those summits to which the term was first applied by Virgil.

PISCATOR. Yes, but on a grander scale than the Corcyrean; they are Langdale pikes at the head of Langdale, rising above Dungeon Ghyll Force and Stickle Tarn. The former of poetic celebrity, and a good example of the attraction that poetry can impart to a spot; the other as deserving, but less sung, less attractive: so accidental even is local fame. Let me call your attention to the chapel we are now passing — Brathay Chapel,—somewhat foreign in its aspect, but chiefly remarkable from the circumstance of owing its existence to gratitude,—for success in business on the part of its erector,—a feeling shown further in that ad-

joining building which is a schoolroom ; and further still in a larger schoolroom higher up the dale. My authority was the late Mr. Wordsworth. Brathay Hall and estate became by purchase the property of a London silk-mercator. This gentleman in walking over the grounds with the Poet gave him some particulars of his life, and ended them with the expression of the motive under the influence of which he built and endowed the chapel and school.

AMICUS. A noble minded man !

PISCATOR. And his family are worthy of him ; and sure I am that they with their good pursuits do not find a tedium in the country ; nor would they probably were they to spend the whole of the year here instead of a part of it. When riches gained in trade are thus beneficially used, who can envy their possessor ! What a dignity is thus given to trade. It is pleasant to think that this is not a solitary example of the kind in the Lake District. I hope we shall visit Keswick together. There some of the members of another family which has acquired wealth in business have similarly distinguished themselves.

AMICUS. Which of the two roads before us is ours? Were we to leave the choice to our ponies, there would be no question, for one is almost formidable in its steepness.

PISCATOR. And that is our way, and when we reach its summit I am sure you will not be displeased. The other, crossing the Brathay, at Skelwith Bridge, is the one we took before, leading into Little Langdale.

AMICUS. Here, indeed, we have pleasure after short toil. What an exquisite spot of beauty!

PISCATOR. This is Loughrigg Tarn, "Diana's looking glass," as our Poet has called it, the most beautiful of our tarns; indeed, almost the only one that can truly be called beautiful, wooded as its banks are in parts, cultivated as they are in parts, and not without cottages; whilst the tarn of the district commonly is situated on the wild, solitary, treeless fell, at an elevation above enclosures, and culture, and the dwellings of men. Here, at one time, a little romance of life was formed: here the friend of the Poet, the late Sir George Beaumont, once meditated having a home, and would, it is understood, have accomplished it,

had not some difficulty arisen about the purchase, which could not well be got over. Had the idea been carried into execution, what a paradise might have been formed here; nature, beautiful as it is already, made more so by art, under the cautious guidance of the painter and poet. You may remember in the epistle of the latter to the former, an expression of regret at the failure of the intention—following his admirable description of the scene.

“I sighed and left the spot,
Unconscious of its own untoward lot,
And thought in silence with regret too keen,
Of unexperienced joys that might have been;
Of neighbourhood and intermingled arts,
And golden summer days uniting cheerful hearts.”

AMICUS. It is a spot to linger at and desire, and yet it is untenanted, except by the small farmer and cotter,—which surprises me.

PISCATOR. What prevented Sir George Beaumont from having a possession here no doubt has prevented others,—the difficulty of effecting a purchase. Where properties are very small, as in the Lake District commonly, and very much intermixed and often entailed, he who requires more than one acre or two will

arely be able to effect his purpose. This difficulty acts as a conservative principle; and reflecting on the natural beauty of spots like this, and that wealth and taste are not necessarily united, I am not sure that the country would benefit much by its removal.

AMICUS. Descending the hill, I infer we are again in Langdale. I see a village, and beyond another.

PISCATOR. We are now entering that part of the valley which bears the name of Great Langdale; the lower portion belongs to Skelwith. That village to which you point is Elterwater, and that beyond is the village of Great Langdale, marked by its church. What think you is the solitary building from which that column of smoke ascends? But why should I ask; you can hardly conjecture. It is a powder mill,—and not far off is a bobbin mill; and yonder is a slate quarry. The coppices around supply wood to the two first,—wood fit for making bobbins and charcoal; and the native rock is of a quality yielding to the skilled workman roofing slate. So these manufactures, if I may so call them, are not here incongruous,—they are, as it were, natural,

arising out of the peculiar fitness of the locality for conducting them successfully. The slate quarry, from the manner in which it has been worked, its great extent, its excavations, and picturesque aspect, is worthy of a visit from those who have not seen the Welsh slate quarries, even more vast. Whilst I think of it, if ever you intend to build, and are not too distant, let me recommend your getting slate from hence, or from this district: it has justly the preference for buildings in which regard is had to what is pleasing, on account of its lighter colour and more agreeable hue, and I believe I may say greater strength.

AMICUS. We have been some time silent, as if by mutual consent. I have been intent on the succession of pleasing objects and delectable views at every turn of the road, all in character; the wild and cultivated so happily intermixed; the pleasant meadows below; the winding stream; the pretty antique farm houses, shaded with the fir and yew; and most conspicuous, the rugged steeps,—those mountain fells narrowing the dale as we ascend, and bringing it to an end.

PISCATOR. In a scene like this, conversation is hardly necessary; and I have had nothing special to point out till now. That pretty waterfall, or rather succession of falls, marks the direction of Stickle Tarn, up under the pikes; and a little to the left is Dungeon Ghyll Force. We are fast approaching the last house in the dale; there we shall have to ascend and make a detour by Blea Tarn, over Wrynose, and Cockley-beck, on the Duddon, where our angling may commence. We are getting into a cooler air, and may hasten our pace. You will now have a better view of Blea Tarn, and the wild little mountain valley, with its single farmhouse, the imagined scene of the Recluse of the Poet, than when you passed it before lower down. Do observe it well.

AMICUS. We get on rapidly, notwithstanding the steepness of the way. That must be Cockley-beck; I cannot forget it. There is the single arched primitive bridge over the mountain stream, and there the solitary cottage with its two or three companion sycamores pleasantly shading it, though hardly yet in leaf. What a wild ride we have had over these

high green mountain fells ; and how agreeable, and as I feel exhilarating,— but why, I hardly know ; whether it be the effect of our breathing a purer air, or a lighter one, or a cooler one ; for I cannot but believe that the air is concerned in the sensation.

PISCATOR. Probably so, and probably owing to diminished pressure ; for chemical research hitherto has not detected any material difference in the composition of the mountain air and the air of the valleys. It is a delightful sensation, and nowhere have I experienced it in a higher degree than in mountain regions within the tropics ; there, even by the mere sensation, I always knew when I had attained a certain height above the level of the sea. Coolness of atmosphere might have been there concerned more than here in the pleasant feeling, passing, for instance, from a temperature of 80°, or higher, to one of 60°, or even lower. Now, we will dismount ; our servant, after giving our horses a feed of oatmeal and water will take them back. We shall be able, I do not doubt, to get some one here to carry our old-fashioned saddle-bags, containing a change, to Seathwaite, where we

shall find sleeping quarters, a place not without its special interest; and there we will meet; the river will be your sure guide. Fish the deeper pools, disregarding the shallows and rapids; as there is a wind, there is a prospect of sport. When you come to the "Stepping-stones," you are at Seathwaite: they are a good mark.

AMICUS. Well met. These, I presume, are the "Stepping-stones." Here I have been waiting for you, a spot well fitted for waiting, independent of the interest connected with it, from the sonnet dedicated to them, pointing to the extreme feelings of the child and of declining manhood.

PISCATOR. And where

"The struggling rill insensibly is grown
Into a brook of loud and stately march."

Is it not fine, bursting out of that immense chasm, as if the mountain had been cleft to give the stream passage; and, as if in the convulsive act, all that ruin of rocks, all those disjointed fragments lying in confusion on the steep de-

clivities, had been produced. Now, for your sport. What has been your success?

AMICUS. A few smelts, and a few brandlings, and some small trout. I have measured a few of the former; the largest of the smelts is about seven inches in length, the smallest of the brandlings not exceeding three and a half; and many I saw in the beautifully clear water higher up the stream even smaller, seeming to denote that there are, at the present time, fry in the river of different ages.

PISCATOR. From the examination of those I have taken, I have come to much the same conclusion. I will show you the way to our farmhouse inn, and pray be observant as you go. We are told, and we have it on good authority that, when the last clergyman but one came to reside at Seathwaite, "the place was as if it had never before been inhabited. There were no roads, no woods, no meadows, no neighbours." That clergyman was Robert Walker — the Wonderful Robert Walker, the epithet applied to him by his neighbours who knew him best. You will see the change that has occurred, and mainly owing to Robert Walker.

AMICUS. You ~~excite~~ my curiosity. Pray gratify it with some account of a man of whom, as of a phenomenon, I have already heard vaguely.

PISCATOR. Wonderful has not been the only term applied to him : it is the culminating one of others—of humble, worthy, good, patriarchal; and the more I reflect on the character, the more sensible I am of the propriety of it. Fortunately, though he lived in obscurity, he was not without a biographer. Appended to the sonnets on the Duddon, is a very instructive account of him by the Poet, and also in the "Excursion;" the Parish priest, so finely delineated in the seventh book, is a painting of this very man, somewhat idealized. You will find also many and additional particulars of him in a little book bearing the quaint title of "The Old Church Clock."

AMICUS. Tell me, if you please, what you know of him. Besides your epithets, even what I already see — these trim meadows, the ladder-styles by which we pass from one field to another, even the fastenings of the gates, so simple and ingenious, mark peculiarity, and

make me the more desirous to be informed about him.

PISCATOR. I have been unguarded, perhaps, in exciting so much your curiosity, which, commonly, it is more easy to raise than to satisfy: but, in this instance, the task I think will not be very difficult. Let me consider; where shall I begin? Each period of Robert Walker's life was remarkable. He was, we are told, a weakly child, one of twelve, the youngest; and that on account of his weakly state, his father, a small statesman, gave him what schooling he could, which, as he was born and brought up in this very township, at Undercrag, you may well imagine was scanty enough. Before he reached manhood, when he was about seventeen, he became a schoolmaster. This was at Gosforth, near Egremont, in Cumberland, where he remained two or three years. Thence he removed to Buttermere, where he obtained a nomination, and entered deacon's orders. There he acted both as minister and schoolmaster; and in the latter capacity, to enable him to live on his small salary, after the manner of the country he went from house to house, abiding a fortnight at a time at each.

We are informed by his great grandson, that now, to add to his means, he began a system of industry, the relation of which will surprise you. I will read it to you, having brought the little book containing it in my pocket : — “ In the mornings before school-time, and in the evenings, he laboured in manual occupations : during the day he taught the school. He made his own sermons, and performed the whole duty twice on Sundays. In summer, he rose between three and four o’clock, and went to the field with his scythe, his rake, and in harvest time, with his sickle. He ploughed, he planted, he went up the mountains after the sheep, he sheared and salved them ; he dug peat, all for hire. When engaged in these employments, he would be at work long before those who were regular labourers, and remain after they had finished their day’s work. Nor was he only diligent in such labours, but he excelled. In winter, he occupied himself in reading, writing his sermons, or in those domestic employments which are now generally performed, if not by machinery, by old and indigent females. He was an excellent spinner of linen and woollen thread. All his own cloathes, and

afterwards those of his family, were of his spinning. He knit and mended his own stockings, and made his own shoes [and tanned his own leather]. In his walks, he never neglected to gather the wool from the hedges and bring it home. He was also the physician and lawyer of the place; he drew up all wills, conveyances, bonds, &c.; wrote all letters, and settled all accounts; and frequently went to market with sheep, wool, &c., for the farmers."

AMICUS. Truly marvellous! What next?

PISCATOR. The next step in his career was his removal to Torver, on the banks of Coniston Water. There he took priest's orders, and presently after a wife, a respectable maid-servant, whose affections he had gained at Buttermere; and who brought him a fortune of 40*l.*, which he forthwith invested in the funds. This, his marriage, was preparatory to another change, to the curacy of Seathwaite, his permanent residence; and where, as curate, he officiated for sixty-seven years, commencing on a stipend of 5*l.*, gradually increased to 17*l.*, and from which no offer of emoluments could tempt him to remove. He equally resisted improving his income by accepting an addi-

tional and adjoining cure, that of Ulpha; believing that he could not perform rightly the duties of both, and thinking he might be considered grasping and avaricious. And now, having brought him to Siethwaite, there is the **house** he occupied, on the other side of the brook which we have to cross by that pretty rustic bridge. We can resume the subject by and by; see, there is the farmhouse where we have to seek a quarter!

AMICUS. Oh! the advantage of a good appetite. Most true is the adage that "it needs no sauce." I have enjoyed this dale fare of eggs and bacon, with our little dish of fish and these excellent potatoes. Yet good as the fish were I have eaten better.

PISCATOR. The Duddon, from the purity of its waters and their force as a mountain stream, sweeping bare the rocks over which it flows and producing shifting beds of shingle, affords little feed; and the fish being poorly fed are deficient in firmness, especially high up, where we have angled to-day. We shall find them improve in quality as we get nearer the sea. Now we are refreshed, we will, if you please, pay a visit to the chapel and to the minister's

house hard by; they are within a few minutes' walk.

AMICUS. The house is nowise remarkable, a neat substantial little cottage.

PISCATOR. The first time I was here, it was occupied by Robert Walker's successor, the Rev. Mr. Tyson, since deceased, who had been seven years Robert Walker's curate and was then well advanced in years, — a decent, respectable man and respectably dressed in black, even to black worsted stockings, but in no manner a remarkable character. Would that I had seen Robert Walker himself! Here is a description of him by one who did see him, and in his ordinary homely dress. "I found him (says the writer, and it was 1754), sitting at the head of a long square table, such as is commonly used in this country by the lower class of people, dressed in a coarse blue frock, trimmed with black horn buttons, a checked shirt, a leathern strap about his neck for a stock, a coarse apron and a pair of great wooden soled shoes plated with iron to preserve them (what we call clogs in these parts), with a child upon his knee eating his breakfast." The writer adds, — "His wife and the remainder of his

children were some of them employed in waiting upon each other, the rest in teasing wool, at which trade he is a great proficient; and moreover, when it is made ready for sale, will lay it by sixteen or thirty-two pounds' weight upon his back, and on foot, seven or eight miles, will carry it to the market even in the depth of winter." Concluding with the remark: "I was not much surprised at this, as you may possibly be, having heard a great deal of it related before. But I must confess myself astonished with the alacrity and good humour that appeared both in the clergyman and his wife, and more so at the sense and ingenuity of the clergyman himself."

AMICUS. How primitive, and may I not say apostolical! I have witnessed in my wanderings nothing equal to this, not even amongst the Greek clergy, whose mode of life is commonly simple enough and without ostentation and the burden of riches. The chapel, I perceive, is of the ordinary form of those of the district, and but little larger than that of Wastwater.

PISCATOR. You see, from the alacrity of fetching the key and opening it, the people here have

a pride in showing it. That pew, the clergyman's, is lined with cloth of Robert Walker's own spinning. When he came here, he found it without pews; so it remained for many years; then he used it as a school-room and his place was by the communion table. He is described as sitting there, wearing a cloak of his own making. His great grandson relates that "many a time when his family wanted cloth, he used to take the wheel into the school and spin there," and that "he had also a cradle there of his own making." "Frequently (he says) have the cradle and the wheel and the teaching required the ingenuity of the clergyman at the same moment." After the chapel was "pewed," the school teaching was given up there, the free space was so curtailed; and about the same time the present little school-room which we passed was built. We are assured that he received no money for teaching, the parents being too poor, and that he was requited only by offices of love. They assisted him to dig his potatoes and fuel, to cut his hay and reap his corn. Now, let us go out into the churchyard. Here is his grave. Read the inscription on the head-stone,

IN MEMORY

OF

THE REV. ROBERT WALKER,

WHO DIED ON THE 25TH OF JUNE, 1802, IN
THE 93RD YEAR OF HIS AGE, AND
IN THE 67TH YEAR OF HIS CURACY AT SEATHWAITE.

ALSO OF ANN HIS WIFE, WHO DIED ON THE 28TH OF
JANUARY, 1800, IN THE 93RD YEAR OF HER AGE."

After the death of his wife, we are informed that he whose "health and spirits and faculties were unimpaired till then," then experienced "such a shock that his constitution gradually decayed." These are the words of his great-grandson, who adds the following touching particulars. "His senses, except his eyes, still preserved their powers. He never preached with steadiness after his wife's death; his voice faltered; he always looked at the seat she had used. He could not pass the tomb without a tear of sorrow. He became when alone sad and melancholy; though still among his friends kind and good-humoured. He went to bed about twelve o'clock the night before he died. As his custom was, he went tottering and leaning on his daughter's arm to examine the heavens and meditate a few minutes in the

open air. 'How clear the moon shines to-night.' He said these words, sighed and lay down. At six the next morning he was found a corpse." His great grandson, in his eulogy of him, says in concluding: "He was a passionate admirer of Nature; she was his mother, and he was a dutiful child. While engaged on the mountains, it was his greatest pleasure to view the rising sun; and every tranquil evening, as it slid behind the hills, he blessed its departure. He was skilled in fossils and plants; he was a constant observer of the stars and winds; the atmosphere was his delight; he made many experiments on its nature and properties. In summer he used to gather a multitude of flies and insects, and by his entertaining descriptions amuse and instruct his children." When mentioning the epithets applied to him, *humble* was one of them as well as wonderful, and it was not the least remarkable of them. Here is a mark of it. Though in priests' orders, and though highly respected, he did not for several years administer the Sacrament. A clergyman from Broughton used to come three times a year, we are told, for the purpose.

AMICUS. Thank you for this account of a

remarkable man; a good and great man, and in my mind more deserving of the title of great than those who have earned it in command of armies and in fields of blood — the heroes of the vulgar.

PISCATOR. I in part agree with you, — believing that humility is one of the qualities of the highly gifted. Perhaps you will somewhat lower your opinion of Robert Walker when I tell you that he died worth 2000*l.*, and this after bringing up decently and settling in life a large family; and he had twelve children.

AMICUS. Not a jot, as I infer he effected it by his economy and good management, and as you say he was without greed and declined increase of income likely to interfere with his duties. It surprises me, however, that he could have laid by so much.

PISCATOR. In his time there was no public house here. From Mr. Tyson I learned that his house afforded refreshment, and that he did not object to payment in return, supplying even malt liquor of his own brewing; never, however, allowing any excess to be committed, and never permitting spirits to be drunk under his roof. This may have been one of the many

small sources of his accumulated gains. And, considering his general character, we may, I think, give him credit for thus opening his house with the good intent of preventing the establishment of the ordinary public house, in which drunkenness is too often encouraged rather than checked. Now let us return to our quarters. To-morrow, we should be astir early, and make the best of our way down the Duddon. The day's exercise should ensure us sound sleep; and, if we dream, may it be of Robert Walker, a "Gospel Teacher"

"Whose good works formed an endless retinue :
Such priest as Chaucer sang in fervent lays ;
Such as the heaven-taught skill of Herbert drew ;
And tender Goldsmith crowned with deathless
praise !"

And surely most fortunate is he of all priests in having such a poet as the Minstrel of the Duddon to sing his praises. And this reminds me of a remark of the sober-minded Mr. Tyson (he was drying his onions at the time we entered into conversation with him) who, on my saying that Mr. Wordsworth had immortalised in verse his predecessor, naïvely remarked "Yes, indeed, sir, for a considerable time."

AMICUS. Good morning! I have been out before you and have had a pleasant short stroll; first, by the brookside, the tributary stream of the Poet,—

“Hurrying with lordly Duddon to unite.”

In it I took two or three brandlings; and above the rapids two or three brook trout, remarkable for their blackness and slimy softness,—the one, in their slow growth, supposing the brandlings to be twelve months old, denoting, I infer, poor feed, the other, in their colour, indicating scanty light, and so according in colour with the dark hue of the stream, derived from the colour of its rocky bed. A little later, in returning, I revisited the chapel, and was more observant of its site and accompaniments, of the magnificent yew shading it, and of the larches, now goodly trees, which might have been planted by Robert Walker; and, within, I consulted the register in which I found this, which I have copied—

“Buried June 28th, the Rev. Robert Walker. He was curate of Seathwaite sixty-six years. He was a man singular for his temperance, industry, and integrity.”

PISCATOR. A modest and characteristic notice, and certainly without flattery. Had you followed the stream up you would have come to a tarn,—Seathwaite Tarn, which I hope some day to fish with you. It abounds in small trout, I am told, for I have not yet visited it.

AMICUS. Close to the pretty pool, below the wooden bridge, in which I took the brandlings, is a ruined building. Is that the remains of a cloth-mill, of which, I fancy, I have somewhere read?

PISCATOR. It is, and marks the transition grade from the spinning-wheel to the great manufactory. It failed, I suppose, because it could not stand competition with the gigantic undertakings of the great capitalist. Pray hasten your breakfast, for it is time we should be starting. I will precede you. Again the river will serve you as an unerring guide. I have paid the reckoning; we will meet at Ulpha Kirk.

AMICUS. I am glad to find you here, — here, at Ulpha, so unmistakeable by its pretty chapel, conspicuously standing above the Duddon, a

good mark to the weary traveller coming in, like me when day is closing in.

PISCATOR. And, I am glad to see you, for I began to fear some accident might have befallen you. The site of the kirk perhaps suggested to the Poet the leading idea in the sonnet commencing,—

“The Kirk of Ulpha to the pilgrim’s eye,
Is welcome as a star, that doth present
Its shining forehead through the peaceful rent
Of a black cloud diffused o’er half the sky :
Or as a fruitful palm-tree towering high
O’er the parched waste beside an Arab’s tent.”

AMICUS. Ha ! how, that last line brings back past times and scenes, and the comfort I have had when journeying in the wilds of Ceylon at the sight of the palm, the cocoa-nut palm, which there is almost a domestic tree, marking always human dwellings, for nowhere else, never in the wild woods out of the protection of man, do you meet with it. The natives view it in this light ; they say, it never flourishes “except you walk under it and talk under it,” and there is reason in the saying, for if not guarded, it is sure to be thrown down in the wilder parts of the country by the elephants, for the sake of its leaves.

PISCATOR. And in confirmation I may remark, that in the West India Islands and tropical America, where palms have no such natural enemies, they grow wild and abound, constituting a chief charm of the woodlands, and a marked peculiarity in their favour comparing them with those of India*, where the wild elephant is found. But what of your sport, and why have you loitered so long?

AMICUS. Wandering by the pleasant Duddon how could I but remember your *carpe diem*, and add *festina lente*; and the day I have enjoyed, and that leisurely, — sometimes fishing, where the water was most inviting, and sometimes resting, where the banks were most flowery and tempting, where sweet sounds were mixed with vernal odours, the music of the stream and the song of birds. As to my angling success, see my pannier. There are a good many smolts in it and a few trout, the largest not

* I had written, "and of Africa;" but I have learnt from a missionary, well acquainted with the western coast and its interior, that there elephants and palms both abound, probably owing to the soil and climate pecially favouring the growth of palms, and in situations not easy of access.

exceeding a quarter of a pound. Pray what have you done?

PISCATOR. My doings have been much the same as yours, with the addition of a sea-trout, which I did not expect to take at this season, — one of about two pounds, — in good condition and evidently a fresh run fish.

AMICUS. In handling two or three of the trout I took to day, the instant they were drawn out of the water, I am confident they emitted a sound, which has perplexed me, knowing that they have no voice, no vocal organ.

PISCATOR. I have often made the same remark in handling freshly taken trouts. From the observations I have made since my attention has been directed to it, I am satisfied it is owing to the escape of air from the air-bladder compressed by the hand, and its passing through the orifice opening into the gullet. If you make the trial under water, you will witness its verification. The circumstance, I may remind you, is in accordance with the idea entertained by some physiologists, that the air-bladder is the analogue of the lung. We are losing time. See the table is spread in the

clean little room within ; and I dare say, to day as well as yesterday, our exercise with a pretty long fast will have gotten us an appetite and relish for our dinner ; so make your necessary change as speedily as possible : the damsel there will show you your room, which you will find more comfortable than the ruder one at Seathwaite.

AMICUS. Good morning ! How fortunate we are in our weather ; and in such weather with the bursting spring, how beautiful is Donnerdale, the Vale of the Duddon !

PISCATOR. And how beautiful is the Duddon itself ! now an ample stream, yet with the same untamed mountain character, oftener dashing amongst rocks than resting in deep pools. From the fell, we shall have to follow it to-day in our angling, into the lowland meadows, and from thence to the still lower sands — that plain of sand, where wandering, lingering, it ends its course in the sea ; and let us join in the Poet's wish, as expressed in the last of his Duddon sonnets, and in the "After-thought,"

alluding to the river, its ending and ever enduring,—

“And may thy Poet, cloud-born stream ! be free,
The sweets of earth contentedly resigned,
And each tumultuous working left behind
At seemly distance, to advance like thee,
Prepared in peace of heart, in calm of mind
And soul to mingle with eternity.”

You remember the “After-thought,” beginning —

“I thought of thee, my partner and my guide,”
and ending mysteriously, profoundly, and
cheerfully —

“Through love, through hope, and faith’s transcendent
power,
We feel that we are greater than we know.”

AMICUS. Charming poetry ! true philosophy !

PISCATOR. Here again we part to meet at Broughton. The road to the town, pray keep in mind, is over the last bridge on the Duddon, the many arched one, and what a contrast with that of the small single arch at Cockley-beck !

AMICUS. And what a contrast are the Duddon Sands, its terminus, with the mountains that gave the river birth ; and yet they, the sands

and the mountains, are they not the same only changed in form?

PISCATOR. And, as what remains of the mountains, though called everlasting, may in process of time become sand and find a resting place in the ocean, so in further progress, the loose sand may become fixed and acquire solidity, be lifted up again and again in its mountain altitude, be the birth-place of another Duddon.



COLLOQUY X.

The Greta.—Derwentwater.—The Derwent.

AMICUS.



HAVE found in your library "Southey's Colloquies."* I opened the book with hesitation,—a feeling of short duration, the charm of the writing increasing as I proceeded, and I may add the weight of the matter, embodying evidently the mature thoughts of a man of genius on subjects always interesting — the progress and prospects of society.

PISCATOR. The book is a favourite of mine on many accounts. There is originality in the design,—a conversation on the past and present, and that carried on between a ghost and a living man. The one of a no less distinguished person

* "Sir Thomas More, or Colloquies on the Progress and Prospects of Society," 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1829.

than Sir Thomas More, the best of men, the other, the author himself, under the assumed name of Montesimos: then the scenery described is the immediate neighbourhood of the Poet's residence in which he so much delighted; and delightful in itself, he has preserved its charm, in description, to say nothing of what is more important — the philosophical views, so vigorously expressed, which he takes of society in its ever-changing state, during the memorable historical period comprised between the Protestant Reformation, the great religious movement, and the French Revolution, the great political movement.

AMICUS. The mention made of the Greta in the course of the "Colloquies," excites in me a desire to see it; and if the angling in it be in any degree proportionate to the beauties attributed to it, it must be a most delectable stream and well worthy of being explored. What say you of making our next excursion to it?

PISCATOR. Good! we cannot do better. And, that you may see it thoroughly, we will trace it from Thirlmere, its principal source, to the Derwent, which it joins within a hundred yards of the Lake Derwentwater, from which the river,

the Derwent, issues. The time is favourable; owing to the dry weather we have lately had, we shall have no great difficulty in following it in its wildest and most romantic track, and where pent up in the gorge of the valley, we may have to ford it to make our way. The mail coach will take us in good time to the vale of St. John; we shall have the greater part of the day before us; and fishing as we go, we shall have no difficulty in reaching Keswick before nightfall. To morrow, if you please, we will start after an early breakfast.

AMICUS. Here we are on our fishing ground, at ten o'clock, after a pleasant drive this fine April morning. Much as I admired the Vale, when I first saw it, now it appears to me even more beautiful than at first.

PISCATOR. A true sign of real beauty is the improving on acquaintance. I am always mistrustful of the first impression. Moreover, since you were here, though so short a time ago, spring has advanced; the early trees, the birch and the larch, have opened their delicate foliage, and a warmer hue has become diffused

where there is woodland, here not scant, from the expanding buds of the common trees. Then, too, the meadows had not the animation which they at present possess in the young lambs, now racing and sporting in all the glee of a happy existence,—the very emblems of such an existence.

AMICUS. Whilst we are putting together our rods, tell me, if you please, the names of these hills, the principal features of what I am admiring.

PISCATOR. The blue mountain rising grandly in the distance, immediately before us, is Saddleback; that steep hill close by, rising abruptly from the river, clad with larches, is Naddle Fell; the rocky height opposite is Walter Crag or Fell, which in its castellated form is best seen from a point lower down in the valley. It is this crag, remember, of which I made mention before, as the scene of romance, figuring mysteriously in the “Bridal of Triermaine.” The hill behind us covered with mixed wood is Greenhow. Now, let us part: you proceed, and I will follow. Wait for me where the river changes its character, there where its rapids commence. We shall need some refreshment,

such as our sandwiches afford, before entering on the difficult part of our way; and you must allow me then to be your guide.

AMICUS. I am glad you have overtaken me. It is now two o'clock, and our sandwiches will not come amiss. Shall I confess that I have been disappointed in the river, both as to fishing and beauty. I have risen very few fish, and taken only some small trout and two or three smolts; nor am I surprised, there are, since leaving the upper portion of the beck, so few pools of any promise, and hardly a rock to break the even flow of the water over its gravelly and artificially embanked bed.

PISCATOR. You passed too rapidly where you should have lingered and fished diligently. I speak of the upper portion of the beck, there the very perfection of a trout stream, flowing as it does amongst rocks and over rocks, deep and shallow in succession, keeping its natural course, having good bottom feed, and also surface feed, from flies bred in the adjoining wood, and not without good trout, of which in my pannier you may see a half-a-dozen, one

rather exceeding half-a-pound. Here, where we are now, where the river begins its winding course, we may consider the Greta commencing, or a little farther down, where it is met by the Glendermaken, a rivulet (now so small that you will hardly notice it) rising out of two small tarns, Bowscale and Threlkeld, the latter, like the castellated form of rock we have left behind us, a subject of fabulous narrative, being described as almost inaccessible, though not difficult of approach; as unfathomable, though shallow; as so deep in shade, from the surrounding and overhanging mountains, that the sun never shines on it and the reflection of the stars may be seen in it at noonday, — a marvel, I need hardly remark, not an exaggeration simply, but altogether imaginary. An interesting story, and a true one, however, you may remember, is connected with the name, viz. that of the Shepherd Lord, “the Good Lord Clifford,” who, in the troublesome times of the Roses, owed his life, after his father’s death on the bloody field of Ferrybridge, to seclusion in these wilds, — a story charmingly given in verse by Wordsworth and in prose by Southey; — by the latter, you may recollect, in the “Colloquies”

you were speaking of; by the former in the poem entitled "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle," upon the restoration of Lord Clifford, the shepherd, to the estates and honours of his ancestors, concluding thus beautifully :

"Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

"In him the savage virtue of the race,
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead :
Nor did he change ; but kept in lofty place,
The wisdom which adversity had bred.

"Glad were the vales, and every cottage hearth ;
The Shepherd Lord was honoured more and more ;
And, ages after he was laid in earth,
'The Good Lord Clifford' was the name he bore."

AMICUS. I remember the story and its happy ending, and I thank you for repeating the verses. Whilst waiting for you, I inquired of the ploughman, whom you see hard by, where the Greta begins and St. John's Beck ends. Though living on the spot, he could give me no precise information ; he seemed even ignorant of the name of the Greta.

PISCATOR. A proof of the little interest he takes in it, and of the little curiosity of the

people of the country in matters which do not affect their interests. The same man, probably, could tell you the names of all the hills in sight, these localities really interesting him, in connexion with the erratic habits of the sheep. Apart from this consideration, his ignorance of the Greta is not surprising, inasmuch, as St. John's Beck, at its origin, is, when low, little inferior in volume of water to the Greta so that it might be well called the Greta through its whole course, if its upper portion deserved the name as much as the lower, which we are about to see.

AMICUS. You allude to the meaning of the word Greta, I infer — “the loud lamenter,” which, according to Southey, is the plain English of its Norse name, synonymous, I think his friend Coleridge somewhere remarks, with the *Cocytus* of the Greeks.

PISCATOR. Exactly so; and when we have explored it, I am sure you will agree with me that it deserves so to be called.

AMICUS. I am at a loss to understand its course; for if Keswick lies, as you say, to the left, I see no opening in that direction by which it can pass.

PISCATOR. Truly so; the gorge it enters, and

by which it descends, is hidden ; the dividing hills approach so near to each other, of which you will presently have ocular proof. Now, let us renew our angling, and proceed on our way.

AMICUS. Here we are, safe after our fatiguing scramble and struggle. The name Greta is certainly well deserved, for rarely have I heard a more clamorous stream, and never followed a more difficult one, yet I will not call it infernal, as it rather leads to a paradise. Shame, I say, to the landed proprietors, who have not made a pathway, so that its wild beauty may be enjoyed without risk of life, and enjoyed also by those not equal to the fording of rapids over slippery rocks, and the climbing of heights, almost precipices, where a single false step might be one too many, and a last one.

PISCATOR. It is strange indeed, that such a mountain stream, and so praised as it has been by a distinguished author, should be so neglected. As far as we are concerned, however, we need not, I think, lament the neglect. For the difficulty of seeing it, the little risks incurred, give a zest, and surely add to the

interest. How charming in their perfect seclusion were certain spots, where nothing was to be seen but sky, wood, and water; and no sounds were audible but the song of the thrush, mingling with the ever resounding voice of "the loud lamenter." Where wildest, I was reminded of the Teme, as it descends with the same character of a mountain torrent from the upper vale of Leintwardine to the lower one of Downton. The hills in both places are as steep, and are similarly wooded; but how different the care bestowed! there, by a safe path, you can walk at ease, and view at leisure all the tumult of the rushing waters, and see as in a picture the fine effects produced. Now tell me of your angling; what has been your success?

AMICUS. Nil; and yet I tried several good pools. Is not the Greta here too much of a torrent to afford tolerable sport? The rocks are washed so clean that there can be little bottom feed; and unless there be fly on the water, which there was not to-day, I should hardly expect success, even were there fish to allow of it. How have you fared?

PISCATOR. Very little better; I have taken

only one ill-conditioned trout, and two or three smolts. Let us now hasten to our inn. I see the smoke of Keswick ascending, a proof that we are near; and lo! that large building! it is a bobbin mill! and yonder another! it is a pencil manufactory. Now, our way is easy. Even to the verge of the town, the Greta, you see, retains its distinctive character; so, a small portion of it at least, wild perhaps enough for most tastes, may be seen without fatigue, risk, or trouble, and it was the portion, I apprehend, that was enjoyed by Southey, who unfortunately was not an angler. To-morrow we will, if you like, take our ease on the lake, and perhaps try the gentle Derwent.

AMICUS. On our way to the lake, pray tell me what fish it contains, and what sport we are likely to have.

PISCATOR. The first question is more easily answered than the second. The blue haze of the atmosphere giving so fine an effect to the Alpine group of mountains seen over that green surface of meadow, with the little or no wind, augurs ill for angling sport of any

kind. As to your second inquiry, the fish of Derwentwater,—they are of several kinds,—trout, pike, perch, eel, vendace, minnow, thorn-back. Is not this an ample list? I was about to add, salmon and sea-trout; but I remembered that these are now become so rare as not to deserve being mentioned, the capture of one or the other having become the merest accident. The same remark applies to the capture of the vendace; not because it is so rare, but because it is contrary to the habits of this fish to take the fly, or any of the baits commonly used here in angling. I have heard of one instance only of its having been taken with the artificial fly, and that by an old fisherman of long experience, and likewise of one only of its having been captured with the worm. The fish on which the angler must chiefly depend for sport, is the trout, and next to the trout, the pike and perch. The trout is pretty abundant, especially since more care has been taken of the fishing, through the meritorious exertions of an angling association, and since the use of the base lath or otter has been prohibited.

AMICUS. I am surprised to hear you say that the vendace is found here, and moreover, that it is not rare. I had always supposed

that it is confined to Lochmaben, in Dumfriesshire, and the adjoining lakes.

PISCATOR. That is still the general belief, indeed, it is only recently that it has been ascertained, in a satisfactory manner, to have a larger range of localities. In this lake, within the last eight years, a good many have been taken by the net, and many also in the same way in Bassenthwaite Lake, that which receives the Derwent, and is distant from this only about three or four miles. That it is not a scarce fish here, may, I think, be inferred from the circumstance of two lately having been killed by a stroke of an oar; and that the fish is a true vendace I am satisfied, having compared a specimen from Lochmaben with one from Derwentwater, and also with one from Bassenthwaite Lake, and found them similar. The two first mentioned I can show you at home; I owe them to the kindness of friends; the last, you may see in the Museum of Keswick, which is worthy of a visit on other accounts.

AMICUS. You have not mentioned the charr amongst the fish of Derwentwater. Is it unknown here?

PISCATOR. It is; and its absence is, I think, a proof of the great delicacy of this fish; for more than one attempt has been made to introduce it, but without success. The failure is commonly attributed to deficiency of depth of water, where deepest being only about fourteen fathoms. But, as I know there are charr in lakes in Connemara, even of less depth, this explanation is hardly satisfactory. I am more disposed to consider the quality of the water as the cause. My conjecture is that it is not sufficiently pure. It may have some taint from the adjoining mines and metalliferous rocks; or it may be too much impregnated with vegetable matter, either in solution or suspension. One of the marvels of the lake, its floating island, which occasionally appears and disappears, composed chiefly of vegetable matter, seems to favour this supposition; and the colour of the water, I think you will agree with me, is also in favour of it: pray observe it in the Derwent as it flows out of the lake. The proximity of the town, with a population amounting to 2400, and its drainage, must tend to render the water somewhat impure.

AMICUS. Speaking of marvels, is not another

marvel of this lake its "bottom wind?" denoted, it is said, by a ruffled surface, — a surface raised in waves, when the atmosphere is still, and supposed to be owing to the evolution of air from beneath. May not such a disturbance, and the air, whatever it is, that is disengaged, have an injurious influence?

PISCATOR. It is not well to try to explain what is obscure by that which is more obscure. As to the reputed "bottom wind," I cannot credit it: were air disengaged, it ought to be seen rising in bubbles, not producing waves. If the fact of there being waves on the lake, in a calm state of atmosphere, be well authenticated, rest assured we must seek some other agent for its production than this imaginary "bottom wind." Here we are at the lake; and the boat is ready to take us on it, and happily close our discussion about these obscurities. Step in; we need not take our rods out of their bags, for the glassy surface of the water — not a ripple anywhere to be seen — gives assurance that no angling skill at present can avail. Boatman, take us, if you please, in the direction best adapted for seeing the lake to advantage.

AMICUS. Here one can well do without ang-

ling, at least on a first visit. Truly this is delightful! What beauty is imparted by these wooded islets! How fine the effect of the mountains — which you well called an Alpine assemblage — seen in their various distances! Looking upwards, pray tell me the name of that finely formed hill at the head of the lake, standing out like a giant fortress.

PISCATOR. That is Castle Crag, at the entrance of Borrowdale, skirted by Catbell Hill, with its precipitous flanks on the right, and by Castle Hill, one even more bold, on the left; and bounding the view in that direction is the loftiest of our mountains, Scawfell.

AMICUS. And what are the names of these pretty islands?

PISCATOR. That we have just passed, so tastefully wooded, and with a dwelling on it as tasteful, is Derwent Isle, formerly called Vicar's Isle, having been a dependence of Fountain's Abbey. That we are nearing is St. Herbert's Isle, so called from a recluse of that name, who had a hermitage on it and there lived and died, and if tradition be true, died, according to a long-entertained wish, at the same instant as his beloved friend St. Cuthbert. Fix that verdant

isle in your memory ; we will read, when we return home, the Poet's lines addressed to this very spot. I think they are amongst those called "Inscriptions." That smaller islet—a tangled brake as it were on the water, shaded with a few Scotch firs, is Ramsholme ; and the larger one, close to the shore, just come in sight on our turning the promontory, is the Lord's Isle, which in the olden time was the site of an earl's residence, of that unfortunate family now extinct, which derived its title from Derwentwater,—and now, alas ! alas ! those tall trees and the rookery they support are, I believe, the only remnants of its former pride of place. Those I have named are the four more conspicuous islets ; besides there are many smaller, or rather rocks which are nameless. Now, boatman, let us to the river, that we may try it, as fishing on the lake in its present calm state is hopeless.

AMICUS. Now we are nearing the river, how shallow the water is becoming ; we are passing over a shoal of gravel, well fitted, I should suppose, for the spawning bed of the charr.

PISCATOR. Right ; but that shoal, I am informed, is of recent formation, and occasioned by the Greta when in flood breaking over its banks and pouring itself into the lake direct.

AMICUS. How pleasant is this little inlet of the lake, with its shaded banks hardly hiding the green meadows! Surely here is its outlet, and this must be the river, though hardly distinguishable, its current is so dull, from the still lake.

PISCATOR. It is the Derwent; and a few yards further, just where you see the first little rapid, owing to a slight fall, is the entrance and junction of the Greta. Boatman, we will now land. We will prepare our rods, and try what our skill can accomplish, as you assure us there are trout and good ones to be taken, fortune and weather favouring. Now we are ready; you Amicus, proceed, and I will slowly follow. As there is no wind, I need hardly say you must confine your fishing to the streams.

AMICUS. I meet you with my pannier empty, having taken only one smolt. I fished too within a mile of the adjoining lake, trying every rapid offering a chance. Surely we have been misinformed.

PISCATOR. I think not. The state of the atmosphere is unfavourable, and also the lowness

of the water. I saw no fly on the water; and a solitary swallow that I saw, the first of the season, was flying high. My success has been little better than yours; I have not risen a single trout and have taken only four smelts. What think you of the river?

AMICUS. Were there sport, I should approve it, for it is a pleasant and easy river to fish, unencumbered with wood, wide enough for a good cast; wading unnecessary; a fair succession of pools and gentle rapids, admirably adapted, I should think, for the grayling; moreover, all that meets the eye is of an agreeable and cheerful kind, flowery meadows, a wide expanse of sky, and noble hills near and distant.

PISCATOR. The meadows are indeed now flowery; how abundant the anemone on this side the river and the primrose on the other side! and here, at least, we have not, as in the instance of the Greta, to make a laborious way, there being both a river foot-path and steps where there are fences. Pray observe the graceful lines of the lower hills, giving a finish as it were to the landscape, owing undoubtedly to a glacier-wearing and polishing action. We have a good part of the afternoon before us,

and, as there is so little temptation to persist in our angling, we had, I think, better change the scene to the town, which is not without its objects of interest. As we return we can visit the spot in which are the mortal remains of Southey, and where, in memory of him, his form is preserved in monumental marble. See, yonder is Crosthwaite Church and churchyard, the receptacle of both; and further on, nearer the Greta, standing on that eminence above the stream — the delight of the poet — is Greta Hall, where he spent so many years and so happily, as he assures us, of his useful and laborious intellectual life, exemplifying a favourite saying of his, *in labore quies*.

AMICUS. Respecting as I do the man, and both for his genius and his worth, I shall have pleasure in accompanying you. Would that I could say with you that I had known the poet and seen him, where he was seen to most advantage, in his own house and amongst his beloved and inspiring books.

PISCATOR. That indeed was a privilege, like admission to Rydal Mount, in the lifetime of his great *confrère*. Each dwelling was characteristic; the one, Rydal Mount, a paradise

surrounded by all the charms of nature, not unaided by art; the other, Greta Hall, an armoury of the mind—a library throughout, even the passages, and so orderly and carefully arranged, that even to the most careless observer what was seen must have appeared a labour of love.

AMICUS. What else is worthy of attention in Keswick? Judging from Southey's writings and the memoir of his life, I should infer nothing.

PISCATOR. Though he has been dead only a very few years, the inference, if applicable before, is hardly so now. Philanthropy and intelligence have of late been active here in spite of apathy and ignorance. You saw last night how the town was lighted with gas. We had to step over to-day, in the principal street, the cuttings for laying the pipes for bringing in a supply of water. I before spoke of a museum as being worthy of being seen; and the more creditable it is, as formed by an individual.* Of more importance are the institutions connected with education, as the library, the schools and the Mechanics' Institute, which, on a former

* The late Mr. Crosthwaite, to whose family it still belongs.

occasion, I mentioned were mainly owing, as well as the erection of the new church, St. John's, to the liberality of one family.* Few towns indeed of its size are better provided with educational means, at least for the working classes, or have been more fortunate in having persons to direct and carry them into effect. As we approached the town last evening, by the Greta, the air, you remember, was scented with sandal wood, and I accounted for it by the manufactory we passed, one of pencils. This is a branch of art peculiar to Keswick, owing its origin to the mine of plumbago, or pencil lead, which for a long period had been opened in an adjoining dale — Borrowdale; an art so extensively carried on at present, as to supply not only the United Kingdom, but also a good portion of the world with this useful article. If time permitted, — I fear it will not, — we should go into

* That of the Marshalls. To members of that family the town is indebted for St John's church and its endowment, the vicarage house, the schoolroom, and library adjoining. The first vicar of St. John's, the late Rev. Frederick Myers, connected with that family by marriage, will long be gratefully remembered in Keswick, for his energy and ability as a minister, his benevolence and amiability as a man.

the workshops and see the processes employed, and the number of hands and the division of labour engaged in the making of a thing so simple as a pencil. Ah! here we are at the churchyard.

AMICUS. As you deprecated criticism on the memorial to Wordsworth in Grasmere Church, so I think it is best to refrain from it in the instance of Southey's. The only wish I will venture to express is, that it were better seen.

PISCATOR. The occupation of our churches by pews, with a view to comfort, has a woeful effect artistically considered. This church, now of so spacious a size, has been enlarged since the poet's time, and at the cost of another individual — a benefactor of Keswick, to whom I believe the town is indebted for that large schoolroom hard by; and not for that alone.

AMICUS. Happy examples these of the voluntary system! Would that Government would exert itself a little more, not in the way of centralisation, to which it shows a bad tendency, but in acts of local beneficence, and in memory of the distinguished dead. What a gracious

deed it would have been, and how useful, had Southey's library been purchased by the Government and presented to the town. A few thousands would have accomplished it: the dispersion of his books would have been prevented; the collection, next to his writings, would have been his best monument, and his children would have doubly profited by it.

PISCATOR. Perhaps the time may come when such acts will be witnessed: happy times they will be; but, I fear they are far distant. Let us drop so chimerical a subject. The hour is near that the coach passes through by which we are to return, so we must hasten to the inn to be in readiness. There is another fishing excursion that I contemplate, and which I am sure you will like, and which will require our return here, when I trust we shall have more leisure and be able to see more of the immediate neighbourhood and of the things worthy of being seen both in the town and country.



COLLOQUY XI.

Merry May.—Derwentwater.—Borrowdale.

PISCATOR.



AM glad I have been able to persuade you to protract your stay here. Now we are entering the merry month of May, we may hope for milder days than those we have had since our return from Keswick. And as the snow is beginning to disappear on Fairfield, I think we may venture to-morrow to proceed on the excursion we have been contemplating.

AMICUS. I am always happy to be under your guidance. The weather we have had lately is characteristic of our climate, and of the season—a season where, according to the direction of the wind, winter and spring seem as it were struggling for the mastery. What a contrast between the meadows, every day

brightening in verdure, and the higher hills crested with snow; and how marvellous, that with such bleak winds as have lately prevailed, and a temperature, at night, at or near the freezing point, and occasionally below it, the buds should be bursting, the flowers expanding, and vegetation generally making such progress!

PISCATOR. Remember that the sun is now exerting a powerful influence, warming the earth and the waters, and thus favourable to the ascent of the sap, and the active processes of change on which vegetable growth depends. Remember, moreover, that the determined time is arrived, when, in the course of nature, a large number of our plants awake as it were from their winter sleep, and spring into active life: each species observing its period with wonderful regularity, denoting a *vis insita* in the individuals almost as strongly marked as in the instance of animals. It would be no great stretch of fancy to associate the budding or flowering of the one with the hatching and birth of the other. We might couple the appearance of the snow-drop and sweet-scented violet with the exclusion from their ova of the young of our favourite fish, the Salmonidæ; flowers next in succession

with the appearance of the tadpole of the frog, and triton, and the birth of the lamb : we might compare the progress of the expanding bud or bulb with that of the ova, — those of birds for example, each kind of which has its developing period ; thus the time of incubation of the barn-door fowl is as near as possible three weeks ; of the common duck, a month ; of the goose, five weeks ; of the swan, six weeks. I need not specify analogous examples of the opening of the leaves of several trees, or the flowering of the bulbs of several plants.

AMICUS. It is a good subject for reflection, and surely for admiration, seeing how that which appears to be the regulating influence is co-ordinate in its various degrees, from just above the freezing point of water to the highest average heat of the tropics, with distinct species of animals and vegetables, securing to the whole of our globe at its surface animal and vegetable life, and for most part with a profuse bounty.

PISCATOR. Yes, the external temperature is so co-ordinate, as you remark, with the plants and the families of the lower animals, mainly the oviparous — not so much so with the viviparous, and of these least of all with the highest

class, man and the other mammalia; and, it may be said, for the simple reason that these, as regards the reproductive process, the embryonic and foetal development, are in a great measure independent of external temperature; the parents having within themselves the power of preserving a constancy of temperature by means of respiration—that degree of temperature most suitable to a healthy and vigorous existence: the Greenland whale sporting and breeding in the cold waters of the Arctic Sea, as well as the Esquimaux wife and mother breathing the air of an Arctic atmosphere, are striking examples of such an independency. In the instance of birds and the hatching of their eggs, the temperature of which during the brooding time is preserved pretty equably by the transmitted warmth of the sitting mother, the independency in question is displayed in nearly an equal degree; but not so in the oviparous animals, such as those of the reptile class, and the class of fishes whose ova after exclusion are forsaken with few exceptions by the parents and left to the mercy of the elements; and, these indeed are merciful, and well supply the absence of parental care; showing again the

order, harmony and beneficence of nature. But in this our discussion we are forgetting our fishing. If, as I propose, we are to set out tomorrow, we must be stirring early to avail ourselves of the mail, which now passes nearly two hours sooner than it did last month, as if in accordance with the influence we have been speaking of. I will see that all things shall be ready we need take with us.

PISCATOR. Here we are again at Keswick ; and as there is wind and cloud, and we have the day before us, we will try the lake. The old fisherman says we may have a chance of killing a trout or two, and that to a zealous angler is sufficient encouragement.

AMICUS. Fine as the mountain groups appeared when we were last here, now after a fresh fall of snow covering their summits, they have even more of an Alpine character ; and how beautiful are the scattered birch in their young rich foliage, showing a hue of gold blended with the tender green, as seen on yonder hill side, where brightened by that gleam of sunshine !

PISCATOR. And, how beautiful the complexion of the woods on that other hill side, produced by the admixture of an infinite variety of tints of the opening leaves of the many different kinds of trees that clothe the declivity. But to our sport. That we may have success, we must look mainly to our flies; we must content ourselves with an occasional glance at the face of nature — a modest glance, as at the face of a young beauty, and I believe the more pure will be the enjoyment. What engrosses too much the sense ends often in satiety.

AMICUS. The wind is cold; the clouds dark and lowering; I fear we shall have no sport. I have had only one rise.

PISCATOR. We have not yet come to the best ground, that off the outlet of the lake, on each side of the gravelly shoal, where you see the waves breaking, and between it and the reeds to the right.

AMICUS. Ah, you have a fish, and he fights bravely. Where is the landing net?

PISCATOR. Forgotten, the boatmen says, in our haste. Never mind. My pannier is at hand; it will serve the purpose for want of a better. Immerse it well. There is our fish

summarily secured, and safe in the basket by one act. It is a beautiful fish, well fed, over a pound, short and thick, silvery below, of a rich olive brown above; a good specimen of the Derwentwater trout, and I am sure it will cut red and be well flavoured when dressed.

AMICUS. What is that amongst the reeds?

PISCATOR. That fine bird just gliding out, like the guardian of the place, that male swan, may enable you to conjecture. The great heap you see of broken reeds rising securely above the water, is a swan's nest; and the female, now we have a better view of it, you may distinguish sitting on it. The pair belong to a friend of mine, whose house is yonder, a lover of all things graceful, and who, with the hope of adding a new feature of beauty to this charming lake, has introduced these birds and others, but with less success than he deserves, as hitherto he has failed in naturalising them by breeding: no young ones have yet been reared. The nest, I am assured, is constructed entirely by the male, who with his powerful bill breaks off portions of the reeds as they grow in the water, selecting those suitable for the purpose; and, what in

relation to instinct is more remarkable, I have heard, that a nest, when altogether finished, had suddenly an addition made to it, followed by a flood, by which addition it was saved from being inundated by the consequent rise of the water. Was not this like intuition?

AMICUS. A curious instance this of high instinct, if it may not be referred to instinct and experience combined. By experience, I mean the recollection of injury from a former flooding of the nest.

PISCATOR. Whichever way considered, the incident is hardly less remarkable. I am disposed to refer the effort, as well as the prescience of its necessity, to pure instinct. Instinct, let us keep in mind, has in its operations hardly a limit; as the sexual feeling impels the building of the nest and the sitting on the eggs, so some feeling produced by a state of atmosphere preceding a heavy fall of rain, and consequent flood, may impel to the heightening of the nest. Is it more remarkable than the building of the ark by Noah?

The fish have altogether ceased to rise; and the best time of the day is past for fishing at this season,—one o'clock;—and of bad augury,

as you remarked, the few swallows which were skimming in their rapid flight the lake, have taken their departure,—so, if agreeable to you, we will follow their example, and land. We have still time to explore Borrowdale, and whilst the ponies we shall ride are getting ready, for which we shall be indebted to a kind friend of mine, the same whose taste I spoke of, we will step into the town and pay our respects to a venerable old man, who in a humble way has laboured well in the cause of science.

AMICUS. I thank you for having given me an opportunity of shaking hands with your venerable friend, Jonathan Otley, the companion of Dalton in his mountain excursions, and the author of the first, and you say the best, the most exact guide-book of the district. He was evidently pleased, and naturally, when we spoke of his connexion with Dalton. “We suited each other very well,” was his remark. His accuracy, for which you say he is distinguished in all things, was shown by his correcting you, when you observed that he, and the more celebrated philosopher, were of the

same age. "Nay, Mr. Dalton was three months my senior, having been born in September, 1776, and I in the January following." From his appearance, I should not have supposed he was so old. Age has dealt kindly with him; and yet I fear he feels the pressure of age, and finds the consolations of old age but very inadequate.

PISCATOR. And so these consolations, even of the best kind, necessarily must be, — old age with failing faculties being the preparation for death, in due course should be the weaning from life. And contented ought we to be, if we have the same consolations as this venerable man can reckon upon, a well-spent life, an intellect improved by self-education, and the possession of bodily comforts, earned by industry in an honest calling, and preserved by frugality. He started as a basket-maker, and became the assistant and companion of men of science. In the excellent life of Dr. Dalton, by Dr. Henry, one of the publications of the Cavendish Society, you will see his account of his mountain excursions with Dalton, and a notice of the gas rising from the floating island of which we were speaking, as an oc-

casional occurrence in Derwentwater.* Here are our ponies ; let us mount and be off.

AMICUS. As you have kindly done before, pray, as we proceed, point out to me any object specially worthy of notice, remembering that I am a stranger here, and that all we see I shall see for the first time.

PISCATOR. I shall keep in mind your wishes ; and, in return, tell me your impressions.

AMICUS. That I will do ; and to begin, I may remark, I little expected so soon to pass into a country with so gentle and pleasing an aspect as this which, with the turn of the road, we are just skirting.

PISCATOR. It is the vale of Newlands, rich and cultivated, more like a part of Kent than of Cumberland. We shall presently quit it, and be again in the midst of the genuine lake-scenery.

AMICUS. How just your late remark ! This mountain turfy path we have been following

* He died some months after this our visit, viz., in December, 1856. Such was the respect in which he was held by his fellow-townsmen, that on the day of his funeral the shops in Keswick were closed.

for the last ten minutes, the lake below us, a belt of woodland only intervening, the grand mountain masses meeting the eye in every direction, is indeed of the genuine lake district scenery, and a fine example of it!

PISCATOR. The woodland belt skirting the lake, is a part of Derwent Park. See, close to the shore, where towards the head of the lake, those pretty diminutive islets, little more than rocks, rise above the water, is a steam-engine and other works, strangely contrasted with the adjoining dark firs, the ornament of that little promontory. There, there is a lead-mine; and the water from that mine, as it flows into the lake, may be one of the causes of the unfitness of the lake for charr, judging from the destructive effects of water from a similar mine, on a larger scale, on the charr at Ulswater. Now we are at the head of the lake, where the floating island is occasionally seen. Yonder is Lodore, where, were not the streams so low, I should have invited you to go to see its water-fall, which, when in full volume after heavy rains, is worthy of a passing glance. Those bold rugged hills behind are well called the Knots, and, assuredly, they are hard

knots. Now we are in Borrowdale; and now in Grange, formerly the property of the monks of Furness Abbey; and that capacious barn is of the olden time, and in accordance with the name of the hamlet. Observe the extended bridge, and the vast and wide spread beds of drift, denoting a rush of water when in flood, which, without such indications, you could hardly have imagined, judging from the present diminutive size of the river, — now bearing the name not of the Derwent, but of Borrowdale Beck.

AMICUS. How neat are these low white-washed cottages or farm-houses, with the row of yew-trees standing before them, denoting, may I not say, comfort, strength, and antiquity.

PISCATOR. The terms, I believe, are not inappropriate, and they are applicable to all the hamlets in this wild, grand, and sequestered dale, as if under a special local influence. These dale'smen, I may inform you, are most independent, chiefly statesmen, not only having landed property of their own, freehold, but enjoying also manorial rights, each property a little manor in itself, the possessor at liberty

to open a mine, or to do whatever his free will may prompt, though the land belonging to him should not exceed an acre or two.

AMICUS. How grand is that wooded hill, rising in the gorge of the dale !

PISCATOR. It is a hill of no mean renown ; you saw it before from the lake ; it is Castle-crag, and was once a Roman fortress or beacon station. According to traditional rumour, the baronial dwelling on Lord's Isle was in part built of stones taken from its summit and from the fortress standing on it ; and we are told that from the isle they were again removed, and have at last, — if at last, — found a resting place in the Town-house of Keswick, and this so late as the beginning of the last century, — the island house having been standing and a dwelling in 1715, when, just before the breaking out of the rebellion of that year, it was visited by the unfortunate lord, the last of his chivalrous race. Well does the poet say, "there are sermons in stones." See, there is a single stone, and that too of some repute, as the ladder ascending it shows. It is the famed "bowder stone," sometimes, but very improperly, called a boulder ; but, in fact,

not one of the mysteriously moved masses of distant origin, only a vast fragment of rock, that has fallen from the cliff above, as its quality and fractured surface clearly prove. Let us rest here for a moment, and look around. I am sure you will admire the grandeur, beauty, and wildness, so singularly combined in this assemblage of mountain, rock, and wood, — all in a state of nature, and wanting only to be perfect a full stream, which it sometimes has, rushing in force through its rocky and winding channel.

AMICUS. It is, indeed, a remarkable scene, and admirable of its kind! Surely there must be a special cause to which it is referrible.

PISCATOR. That cause, I believe, is to be found in the nature of the rock. Here it is of the eruptive kind, little differing from basalt; and, in its outbreak, projected from beneath, it is easy to account for the broken and irregular ground in all its boldness; and in the elements of which the rock is formed, yielding by its disintegration and decomposition a fertile soil, for the luxuriance of the wild vegetation clothing the ruggedness and softening it into beauty.

AMICUS. Here is another change in the character of the rock. Is that the entrance of a quarry?

PISCATOR. Yes; and those men under yonder shed are employed in cleaving the fragments of rock into roofing slate. Observe the skill of that workman; how by a few taps well directed to the edges with his thin knife-like hammer, and then using it as a wedge, he separates the laminæ, and then, by two or three additional blows, knocking off what is superfluous, he gives them their proper form. Step into the quarry; the passage will admit our horses. Be careful, however, when you reach its end, — the end of the passage, — the main excavation being there suddenly precipitous.

AMICUS. What a grand dome, and how fine the effect of the light penetrating from the central opening above into the darkness!

PISCATOR. Now let us remount and hasten on, for we have still a good way to go, and a good deal to see.

AMICUS. Another hamlet, and pleasantly situated, and provided with a public house.

PISCATOR. This is Rosswhaite; and a good station it is for the tourist who wishes to ex-

plore thoroughly the dale and the adjoining mountains, or for the angler who can make his sport subordinate to the enjoyment of scenery; for, as you may infer, the fishing here is not of a very exciting kind; yet, formerly we are told, salmon ran up this stream, and it is said that after a flood lake-trout may be taken in it even now. That comparatively large house, near the public house, was, I am informed, built by a Miss Barker, though never occupied by her, — a somewhat eccentric lady to whom Southey addressed so many of the letters which have found a place both in his *Memoirs* and in the *Selection* (would that they had been more choice!) recently published, proving his regard and respect for her worth and talents. Now we are advancing, let me call your attention to that lateral valley on our left, and the hamlet far up, sheltered and shut in by those mountain heights. It is Stone-whaite, where, it is said, and I believe truly, the sun is never seen during the three winter months. The bold hill immediately above it is Eagle's Crag.

AMICUS. The sombre hue of the houses accords with its dreary name and position.

Before us is a more cheerful sight. Here, indeed, is a little paradise; it raises in my mind the idea of "the happy valley," such as is described in "Rasselas."

PISCATOR. That is Seatoller, the property of a worthy gentleman; and that low white-washed cottage so extended in length with its pretty garden, is his residence. Everything here, you may perceive, denotes care and taste, and exercised where care and taste are not wasted, for happily, whilst sheltered from the cold winds of the north, this the very extremity of the dale is well open to the south, and has a good share of sunshine: were it not so, these meadows would not be so green, the very perfection of mountain pasture, or those young plantations so thriving and vigorous. Now we are about to leave the dale for the fell, button up your coat, and be prepared for a cold air and a keen blast. We have a steep ascent to surmount, and a lofty height to reach, but when we are there, you will not, I think, regret the labour.

AMICUS. So this is Honister Crag, and those pieces of water beyond and far beneath, are, I infer, Buttermere and Crummock Water. You somewhat raised my expectations as to

what we were to see on quitting the dale, but the grand view now opening out before us greatly exceeds them. How like a mighty promontory is this Honister Crag, and were the atmosphere less clear, the lowland to which it descends by a such a steep escarpment would not ill represent the sea. Nor, in the opposite direction, looking towards Helvellyn, is the prospect, though totally different, less peculiar: I could fancy myself in Norway and on its higher fells, which surely cannot be wilder or more rugged, or bearing probably a more wintry aspect, every summit we see, and a good part of the general surface, being covered with snow. Pray what is that path-like line descending from the crag, so like a slide, such as boys make for their amusement down a steep rock or bank?

PISCATOR. It is a sledge track, by which slates are brought from the quarry above, nearly 2000 feet above the level of the sea, and it may be over 1000 feet in direct descent to the mountain road. The poor men who work here have a hard and perilous labour; they accompany the sledge in its descent, and when emptied of its load, they have to drag it back —

reascending, where from the steepness you would not suppose a man could stand; and here they live throughout the week, returning to their families only to spend the Sunday.

AMICUS. A hard life indeed, — proving how man may become accustomed to any kind of life: for, I cannot imagine any other more laborious or less attractive.

PISCATOR. It is not, I would hope, without some compensating attractions, — those common to the hardy mountaineer, — enjoyments to be felt rather than described, and to which even danger gives a zest. But we have not time to moralise; we must hasten our return, for the sun is getting low, and I wish to take you into Seathwaite, the Seathwaite of Borrowdale, a recess of the dale well worthy of a visit.

AMICUS. Our dismounting and leading our horses down has warmed my chilled blood. What a pretty torrent, or rather succession of cascades, is this which we have skirted the whole way of the steep descent!

PISCATOR. Imagine what it is, as I have seen it after heavy rain. Then it is more than pretty; and where it reaches the dale and dashes under these widely spreading larches, — nobler trees

than we could expect to find here, — it makes a scene that I have often wished to have transferred to canvas. Our way, now we are passed Seatoller, is over that single-arched bridge to the right; the road you see passing under that flourishing plantation will take us to Seathwaite.

AMICUS. Here is a new aspect of scenery and a milder air; I could now imagine myself in one of the mountain valleys of Greece. Those old and large hollies, which are so abundantly scattered over the hill-side on our right, are not unlike the evergreen oak, the ilex, or the more stately oak, the vallania; and that spacious dry bed of a torrent, which you say you never before saw dry, is exactly like a fiumara of the same region: and that clump of trees before us, which you call "The Four Brothers," reminds me in its funereal hue of a mass of cypress. The dark hue of these trees surprises me, exceeding that even of the cypress. Are they ordinary yews?

PISCATOR. It was chiefly to show you these yews that I wished you to come here; not but that Seathwaite has other circumstances imparting an interest to it. Let us dismount, and fasten our horses to this old holly tree. Now unfold your map; you see that we are here in

the very heart of the Lake District, in the most central spot amongst the mountains, — these in a manner radiating from hence, and the lakes likewise similarly arranged, as if their basins were rents diverging from this centre. That fumara-like bed, the bright sky, the mild dry air, — mild at least in comparison with that of the fell we have just left, do not suggest that this mountain valley has a greater fall of rain, than with one exception, any spot even in Europe, where a rain-gauge has been kept.* Yet such I believe is the fact; as many as 160 inches having been registered here in twelve months.† A peculiarity this, undoubtedly owing to the position; and what we witness now, denoting extreme drought, is doubtless owing in part to the same cause, — conducive to the water running off rapidly, in conjunction with

* The exception alluded to is “the Styne” or Sprinkling Fell, about a mile and half from Seathwaite, in a south-westerly direction, and 580 feet above it: there it has been inferred from limited observations that about one third more rains falls than at Seathwaite. See *Phil. Trans.* for 1851.

† In one month, the month of February, 1848, the enormous quantity of thirty inches of rain was registered here.

the absence of rain for a longer time than is usual. As to the yews, which I am pleased to find excite your surprise, let me tell you they have not been unsung. They have been the subject of some fine lines by our great poet, who, contrasting them with a yew, not far distant —

“The pride of Lorton vale,
Which to this day stands single in the midst
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore :”

Says of these,

“But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal four of Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove.”

The meditative description of them which follows is happily in accordance with the solemnity of their aspect, so distinct in character.

AMICUS. Viewed at a little distance, such indeed is their appearance; but now we are under their wide-spreading branches, and see nearer their colour, that which seemed black is a fine dark green, conveying, with their delicate foliage and richly coloured and massive trunks and limbs, rather the idea of beauty and strength, than of gloom and solemnity, of beauty and

strength combined, and I might add of comfort, seeing how the ground beneath is free from weeds, and knowing as we do, that, shaded so densely, it is equally protected from night dews and a scorching sun. I have measured the largest of the four, a noble tree in its maturity, without any marks of decay or approaching old age. I had expected it would have measured more; four feet from the ground, it is about twenty-five feet in girth. There is a fifth yew, I see, a little detached, but so little as almost to belong to the group. Is it mentioned by the poet?

PISCATOR. No; no more than those qualities of the trees which you have adverted to; and which, however true, would not have accorded with the train of thought which inspired the verses. Remember, that as in painting so in poetry, little effect can be produced without unity of design; and that there is hardly a subject not capable of producing different trains of thought. Remarkable as these trees we are under are, what think you of another, even more remarkable—an antediluvian! A few years ago, there was a tree of vast size, that was so re-

ported, situated, as I heard it described, a little higher in the dale. My informant, who saw it about forty years ago, said it was then prostrate, and presented, with its dark cavernous trunk and the trees that grew out of it, a most singular appearance, fully realising at least the idea of great antiquity. Now let us away: time will not allow of our paying a visit to the mine from whence the pencil lead has been obtained; nor, indeed, is it worth a visit, being no longer worked; that rent in the side of the hill, about half a mile distant, marks its site. Nor have we time to go to yonder farmhouse, and question the rain-gauge which is there kept.* We must speed back, or night will overtake us; and I think I may promise that you will not be displeased in returning by the way we came; for, in so doing, you will see the dale in a different aspect, with enough of grandeur, and perhaps more of beauty, especially in its middle part,

* One of the many which were under care of the late Mr. John Fletcher Miller, F.R.S., an accurate and zealous observer, to whom we are indebted for much valuable information respecting the meteorology of the Lake District.

with its terrace-like transverse declivities gently sloping, as we shall see them lighted up by the setting sun, — graceful forms, owing, I believe, to glacier action, of which there are other and clear indications in Borrowdale.



COLLOQUY XII.

Crummock Water.

PISCATOR.



THOUGH the wind is from the same unkindly quarter, the north-east, and we can hardly calculate on good fishing, yet having come out we had better not turn back; and pretty sure that this would be your feeling, I have ordered the ponies: and see, they are brought to take us to Crummock Water.

AMICUS. I am willing and ready; so let us be off. It has been a rule with me on excursions of this kind to disregard weather: and I do not remember ever to have repented.

PISCATOR. He who waits for weather ought to have time at command, which you and I have never had. He who waits must necessarily lose time, and probably often patience; moreover,

he must lose that variety of atmospheric phenomena in which there is so much to excite interest and break the dull uniformity of everyday life. Only those who have lived in the East, under a cloudless sky for months together, can perhaps duly appreciate the feeling. Even the getting wet occasionally from exposure to rain, and having now and then to contend with storms, is not without a certain kind of enjoyment.

AMICUS. The putting on dry clothes after having been drenched with rain, I allow to be enjoyment; and comfortable shelter after exposure to wind and cold. I remember once in ascending Etna, when the wind was more violent than was agreeable, and the temperature in the higher regions lower than our Sicilian guides had been accustomed to, on our arrival at the Casa Inglese, which is situated just below the steep ascent of the crater, a lad of the party was so overcome by his sufferings from cold, that he got off his mule crying — a note that was presently converted into laughter, when under cover, aided by the exhilarating effect of a glass of *aqua ardente*. Even walking in rain I can allow to be pleasant, when it is

mild and gentle, bringing out the delicious sweetness of this month of flowers, and accompanied as it sometimes is in favoured spots by the music of our groves. But, surely you are not an advocate for encountering weather, whether pelting rain or driving storm, likely to be injurious to health.

PISCATOR. In asking, you seem to be forgetting your own rule. In reply, I would remark, an angler should be hardy. One of the uses of angling, as I think I said in praising the exercise, is, that it checks effeminacy. At the same time I would not have health neglected or seriously endangered; and with proper precautions, we need entertain no fear on this score.

AMICUS. What are the proper precautions you allude to. I should be glad to be informed of them.

PISCATOR. They are but few; such as continuing exercise on getting wet, and putting on dry clothes, and especially flannel next the skin, immediately on cessation from exercise. A warm bath is a luxury mostly out of reach on such occasions, but a foot-bath is commonly available, and it is not to be despised: if one is cold, the warmth of the water is presently

conveyed to the whole inner frame by the blood circulating through the extremities. A cup of warm tea, or a basin of warm broth, has the like warming effect, coming in the stomach almost in contact with the great arterial and venous trunks. Hot tea is better even, as less exciting than the *aqua ardente* you spoke of, or any other spirituous dram, the effect of which is only temporary, and is liable to be followed by depression. Even if perspiring from exercise, unavoidable in warm weather, the same precaution of change of clothing is hardly less necessary, or is less conducive to comfort than it is to health.

AMICUS. Now we have got on this subject, tell me, if you can, the best way of resisting what I have often found unpleasant—the getting my face scorched, and lips cracked and ulcerated from exposure on these excursions,—exposure to sun and wind; and the effect, if I am not mistaken, is as much from the latter as the former.

PISCATOR. You are probably right in expressing the opinion that the wind is concerned as well as the sun: it may act by its drying influence as much as the sun does by its stimulating inflaming influence. The latter

may be prevented by painting the face black with Indian ink ; imitating what nature has done in the instance of the Negro. But that, you will say, is impracticable. The next best safeguard is a wide-brimmed hat ; the hat white, the under surface of the brim black or green. I need not explain to you the rationale of this. And as some protection from the parching influence of the wind, I would recommend the rubbing the face and lips before starting, with a little sweet oil, or cold cream, or lip-salve, containing oily or fatty matter, whether bear's grease, or what commonly represents it, hog's lard. The ancients understood the use of oil as an external application better than we moderns ; as also the benefit of girding up the loins, when about to be exposed to the weather in taking exercise. Let me advise you, in this latter particular, to follow their example ; it may save you from lumbago — not an enviable malady. A bandage of a few yards, three or four inches wide, of knit worsted — it being elastic — answers the purpose well. I adopted it first in the East, after seeing how our couriers, who in Turkey have to make their long journeys of despatch on horseback, gird themselves well

up before getting into the wide saddle. I would also advise, for exercise, cloathing as light as possible ; that is, no more than is sufficient to afford protection whether from sun or wind, and altogether of woollen, and without lining. It is of importance not to be unduly heated ; light cloathing is advisable on that account ; and if of woollen, it is a tolerable security against being chilled : the lighter it is, the sooner it dries, if exposed to rain. Reason, it is to be regretted, and science, have hitherto been little consulted in regard to dress ; and least of all where it is most important, as in the instance of our troops, serving in all climates. Think of a board of army-cloathing without a medical officer on it ! But this is of a piece with the ill-regulated diet of our soldiers ; as if diet and cloathing had no connexion with health.

AMICUS. Your mention of oil, reminds me of the Psalmist, who evidently refers to such a use of it as that you recommend, when he speaks of its making the face of man to shine, associating it (marking its importance) with wine and bread, as the gift of the Almighty. Now to another point : I remember your saying that angling—wading in angling—is one of the best

remedies for corns, which I have heard called the *opprobrium chirurgiæ*, and which in their annoyance are certainly one of the petty "miseries" of life. Now, though I have waded bravely, as you know, in angling, I have not been rewarded as to my corn, only so much so, that it is less troublesome — abated but not cured.

PISCATOR. If I spoke of wading as a cure, I expressed myself too strongly: I know no cure for corns; but this I am sure of, that they may be next to cured by wading, or, what is equivalent, bathing the feet night and morning in tepid water; so softening the hardened cuticle of which they consist, and then removing it by assiduous paring (I use a file), and the avoidance of pressure by wearing well-made shoes and stockings.

AMICUS. Thanks. Now, pray tell me something of the way we shall go, and the distance.

PISCATOR. To Scalehill, the comfortable inn close to Crummock Water, where we shall have to leave our horses: the distance is about ten miles. The country through which we are to pass, being on the outskirts of the Lake District, has a very mixed character, in part wild and

desolate, in part, and for most part, cultivated, not unlike that bordering on Ennerdale in one direction, and on Hawes Water in the opposite, and like each of those rather arable than pastoral, growing largely oats and barley, but little wheat. This pretty suburb of Keswick, which we are now passing through, is Portinscale.

AMICUS. What is the name of this deep hollow, shut in seemingly on all sides, which we are now entering?

PISCATOR. It is Braithwaite; a spot of bad character for unwholesomeness, attributed, I do not know how justly, to its confined air and bad drainage. Goitre is said to be common here; and yet the water is reputed good.

AMICUS. What is this moorland which we are now ascending. Here certainly there is no deficiency of ventilation.

PISCATOR. This is Windlatter. The guide with whom I first crossed it, maintained that its proper name is Windelatter; it is so exposed to the winds. And this reminds me of the conversation we then had about storms, and the incidents he related of their effects. Probably you have never heard of what is called by the shepherds "storm-stricken;" individuals dying

under exposure to a violent wind, accompanied by rain, such as I hope you will never be exposed to, even on my hardening system. I will relate to you one instance, a well authenticated one, which occurred only a few years ago in the persons of two men and a boy belonging to Kentmere, who went thence to fish in some of the mountain tarns. The time was towards the fall, early in November. Not returning, their friends became alarmed, and a search was made for them, the people of the country all round joining in it, according to custom. When hope of finding them was nearly given up, they were discovered all three together under the shelter of a rock ; the bodies of the men resting in a sitting posture, that of the boy on the knee of one of the men, with a bit of bread in his hand—all three wet and cold, and stark dead, without any appearance of bodily hurt. They were considered storm-stricken ; overtaken, as it was known they had been, by a violent gale accompanied by heavy rain.

AMICUS. I can readily believe in the loss of life under such circumstances, even though the temperature of the air might have been many degrees above the freezing point. A

strong wind, acting on a wet surface, has a wonderful effect in reducing temperature ; and the body has little power to resist it when weakened by fatigue and long fasting, as was probably the case in this instance. The memorable winter of 1854 in the Crimea, afforded too many and disastrous proofs of the fatal agency of these causes combined. Now we have reached the highest part of the road, and are leaving behind us the dreary moorland, how pleasant, wide, and extended is the prospect that is opening out before us.

PISCATOR. That is the vale of Lorton on our right, and I fancy I see the spot where the gigantic yew, "its pride," is situated. Where the smoke ascends is Cockermouth; and beyond, towards the horizon, is the Solway and the Scottish coast.

AMICUS. You have well called this a border and transition land : on our left only hills are to be seen, and we appear to be making the circuit of their belt.

PISCATOR. True ; our way has described nearly half a circle, an unavoidable detour to escape these mountains.

AMICUS. Is this Scalehill ? If so, we are sooner arrived than I expected.

PISCATOR. This is Scalehill, and is it not charmingly situated? There is the river below, flowing out of the lake here hid from us; and the many singing birds we hear making music is a sure sign that there is no want of wood and cover. A friend, who resides in the neighbourhood, has placed his boat at our disposal; we shall find it, I have no doubt, ready in the boat-house close to the water.

AMICUS. Now we are a little off the shore, this lake reminds me of that of Ennerdale. What is its size?

PISCATOR. Both in form and size it does not differ much from the one you have named, being about three miles in length, three-quarters of a mile in width where broadest, and about a quarter of a mile where narrowest. Its depth is such that it rarely freezes; in its deepest parts, it has been found to be twenty-two fathoms: the last winter but one, the greatest portion of it was covered with ice, which I have been assured had not occurred for forty years before.

AMICUS. As there are gleams of sunshine

and occasionally a good ripple, I do not despair of some success. What flies should I use?

PISCATOR. At this season, the March Brown answers well here, and flies of that kind, the prevailing colour of which is brown. Ah! there was a rise, and the fish is hooked. Boatman, be ready with the landing-net. It plays feebly. See, now we have him, he is not worth keeping; for though exceeding half a pound, he is ill-fed, flabby, and unfit for the table. I shall return him to his element, to get into better condition. This lake, like Wastwater, is not an early one, and probably owing to the same cause, the coldness of its water. You have a fish, but it is a small one, yet of a length — about nine inches — that according to the rules established here, may be killed; a licence, you will say and truly, showing that the trout of this lake are not first-rate in size.

AMICUS. I hope they make compensation in quality. The fish I have just taken is in good condition, though not equal in brightness or thickness to the trout you captured in Derwentwater.

PISCATOR. When in best condition, they are hardly equal to the Derwentwater trout, — the

feed here, I apprehend, being less abundant, and inferior. The Crummock trout rarely much exceeds half a pound, and seldom, or ever, cuts red when dressed; when best, its flesh, if I may so call the muscle of a fish, is cream-coloured.

AMICUS. What other fish are found in this lake? From its depth and the clearness of its water, I infer there are charr.

PISCATOR. You are right; and besides charr there are pike — confined to one part where the water is shallow and reedy; and also perch and eels, and occasionally sea-trout. The charr, excepting when young and small, is rarely if ever taken with the fly, and not often with the minnow.

AMICUS. Have the young charr the markings of the parr and young trout?

PISCATOR. I cannot speak from my own experience; an acquaintance of mine who often fishes here, and has frequently taken them, has assured me that they are destitute of those markings: but as those he took might have lost the bars which characterise the early stage of growth, I must consider the point undetermined. He called those he spoke of charr-

smelts, and described them as about six inches long.

AMICUS. The likeness of this lake to that of Ennerdale increases as we advance. What a grand mass of mountain is that on our left; and how fine are those mountains in the distance, towering one over the other.

PISCATOR. The first you pointed to, the nearest, that on the left, on the brow of which snow is still resting, is Grasmore; the more distant are Red Pike, High Stile, Great Gable, the Haycocks, Green Gable, and Honister Crag.

AMICUS. Pray what is the name of that dale, scooped as it were from the great mountain mass of Grasmore; and so finely modelled as if a work of exquisite art, if I may so speak, a perfect mountain corry, as the Highlanders would call it?

PISCATOR. It is Ranadale; and, to anticipate your questioning, those headlands which we are nearing, and where the lake appears to terminate, are Linn Crag and Hawes Point.

AMICUS. The upper portion of the lake, just opening, pleases me much. How pretty are these wooded islets on our right; and how

humanising, I may say, is that neat cottage mansion on our left, with sheltering plantations of young and flourishing trees just bursting into leaf.

PISCATOR. Those are Scale and Holm islets. That neat dwelling belongs to a worthy old gentleman, the proprietor of half the lake and of a good deal of the land that we see. I have heard an anecdote of him which may amuse you. Owing to some accident, he lost a leg, the place of which is supplied by a wooden one. At some merry meeting or carouse, where the excitement exceeded the bounds of good manners, and his ire was roused (it was before he felt the infirmities of age), it is reported, and well vouched for, that, having no cane or stick or other implement at hand, in his impatience to restore order by threatening the unruly with chastisement, he unbuckled and brandished his wooden leg, and with the best effect, both in the way of awe and merriment, if the two can be united.

AMICUS. The first instance I ever heard of a leg being converted into an arm, and so well employed to preserve order.

PISCATOR. One story brings up another.

Relating this reminds me of an anecdote I heard at the same time, the subject of which was a young clergyman, a native of the country, who then had recently taken orders. He was remarkable for his bodily strength and agility, and had been distinguished as a wrestler. His love of the sport tempted him to witness a wrestling match. It was a grand occasion of its kind; two rival parties, whether counties or parishes, I forget which, being opposed. When the struggle for mastery was well advanced, the odds were so decidedly against the side to which he belonged, that fears began to spread of defeat: then he was appealed to, earnestly entreated to doff his black coat on the emergency, and come to the rescue. "Nay! nay! (he said) he could not do that." The contest continued, the best man of his party was thrown. He could stand it no longer, — so the story goes, — he off with his black coat, entered the ring, and threw his man; and, as you may suppose, was hailed with acclamation as victor by his people.

AMICUS. I hope this was the greatest clerical irregularity he ever committed.

PISCATOR. Here, where we are, near Scale Island; the fishing ground is good, and as a

good breeze has sprung up, let us try our best skill.

AMICUS. Our skill has not been exerted with much effect. We have taken altogether only eight fish, the largest, little exceeding half a pound. Is it worth while to persist now the wind is failing?

PISCATOR. I think not. We have had no better sport than we expected on starting: but we have seen the fish of this lake, and that is something; and, what is better, we have seen the lake itself and enjoyed its scenery. We will finish, if you please, by landing and going to Scale Force, — a waterfall which is near; it is only about half a mile from the shore. It is one of the celebrities of the place, and you may as well see it, though, owing to the dryness of the season, you will see it to disadvantage.



COLLOQUY XIII.

Windermere.

AMICUS.



REJOICE that the unkindly, cold and parching east and north-east winds have given place to the mild and genial south and south-west, and the drought to a moist air and refreshing showers. What a change has taken place in the face of the country within the last two or three days! the outburst of foliage, the flowering of shrubs, the growth of grass in the pastures, altogether, is more like what is witnessed in regions approaching the arctic in their climate than what is usual in our average temperate one. See, the oak is coming into leaf and flower, and the other late trees, even the ash, the latest of all, is bursting its black buds and open-

ing its delicate blossom. As I went to and came from Rydal Mount this morning — that delightful walk by the high road skirting Rydal Park—it was interesting to observe the advance of vegetation, and especially in the forest trees, and the variations as to forwardness, not only of different kinds, but also of individuals of the same kind. All the sycamores were nearly in full leaf, and in the bright light green of their leaves resembling as nearly as possible the Oriental plane; so were the beeches, and so were the limes; some of the oaks were just showing their tender delicate leaves, whilst others had them tolerably unfolded. What I witnessed recalled the remarks you made on the *vis insita*, and of the influence of temperature, in our conversation at Keswick.

PISCATOR. Is it not this exhibition of the active powers of Nature which imparts such a charm to spring—the cheerful and endearing season—as much so as the aspect of those failing powers tinges with melancholy, even amidst its more brilliant hues, the autumnal season? I hope in your morning walk your attention was not exclusively directed to what you have so well described. I hope you looked upwards, and to

Fairfield, from which the snow has now entirely disappeared.

AMICUS. That I did, and with admiration, — high clouds breasting it like balloons, and itself of that beautiful deep blue, blending and yet contrasted with the green below in admirable harmony. The colouring, as seen from your garden, which I passed through on my return, seemed to me perfect: in the foreground, the rich bloom of the fruit trees, the apple, the cherry, the pear; Rydal Park and Forest with its varied grounds forming the middle distance, and Fairfield and Scandale Pike the remote. In viewing this charming whole, I had very much the feeling of Virgil's shepherd of *non invideo, miror magis!*

PISCATOR. A just compliment. As to fruit trees, I wish they were more cultivated in this district; and both for use and ornament, for what trees are more beautiful in flower? But enough of our scenery. Before you leave us, we have agreed to have one more day's fishing. I hear that charr are now being taken in Windermere; and, if you please, it shall be there, and to-day, for the weather seems favourable; should we not have success, you will witness

the mode of fishing, and have an opportunity of seeing more of this, the largest, and on the whole, I think, the most beautiful of our English lakes. I have ordered a boat to be in readiness ; and the fisherman to whom it belongs, and who will accompany us, is skilled in the kind of angling to which you will be introduced, but which, being little better than poaching, as I think you will consider it, I am sure you will never follow. We will drive down to Waterhead. A pair of swallows that for several years have built their nests and reared a family under the eaves above the window of my dressing-room, made their first appearance this morning (May 20), and have already commenced repairing their home, broken into by the house-sparrows. I hail their advent as a sign of settled mild weather. How pleasant it was, as the harbinger of so much that is agreeable, to hear again their gentle twitter !

AMICUS. So, this is Waterhead. Why, here is a little fleet of boats, and all, you say, for hire ; and there is a steamboat, and you tell me there is another,—indications these of a busy place, and, I infer, exclusively for pleasure.

PISCATOR. Your inference is right. As beauty

is the staple of the district, so pleasuring, to use a colloquialism, may be said to be its business, and especially here.

AMICUS. All I see around me, the many neat cottages and gardens, the many handsome villas and grounds, shew this: nor am I surprised, looking at the general features of the country, hereabout particularly, where, with so much near beauty, there is combined so much of grandeur as displayed in the distant and girding mountains.

PISCATOR. As the fisherman says we may have a chance of killing a trout with the rod, we will commence our angling in our ordinary way. Let me advise you to put on at least one green drake, and let it be the tail fly. This is about the time that the green drake comes on, and no fly is more attractive to the trout or charr. Boatman, take us off the mouth of the river; that is good ground for trout. The river I speak of is the one formed by the junction of the Brathay with the Rothay.

AMICUS. By the way tell me something of the fish of the lake, and the mode of fishing which you spoke of as poaching, and something too, if you please, of the lake itself; that I may be prepared.

PISCATOR. Of the latter, a good part you will see yourself to-day, and I am sure you will be pleased with it: I wish I could give you the same assurance respecting the fish, which are more easily named and described than caught. They are the trout and charr, the pike and perch, and eel. A salmon has occasionally been taken, but hitherto so rarely, that Windermere cannot be considered a salmon lake. All the fish of this lake are good of their kind; none better. The trout range in size from half a pound and under to three and four pounds and over, though fish so heavy as the latter are not often taken. The charr are mostly of about half a pound, and rather under than over this weight. The fisherman we have with us says the largest he has ever taken weighed nineteen ounces. Two kinds are met with, which are called the silver and red or gilt charr; the latter distinguished by its bright red metallic lustre markings. It is said to spawn later than the other, viz., in the beginning of February; the silver or light coloured charr spawning chiefly in November. I apprehend they are merely varieties, owing their differences chiefly to their feed, and it may be to the quality of the water

in which they are found; the silver charr frequenting parts of the lake of less depth than the haunts of the red charr. The best season for angling here, and both for trout and charr, is from the last week of April to the first week of June, or if cool, to the middle of this month. The pike is taken throughout the spring and summer. Perch fishing is best in the very height of summer. The same baits serve for the trout and charr, viz., the artificial fly and minnow; but the former is more successful with the trout; the latter with the minnow. Ah! a rise! and another; and this has taken the fly. Be ready with the landing net. See, a trout of at least a pound; thick and well fed, and how like that of Derwentwater!

AMICUS. I have risen two or three fish, but in vain.

PISCATOR. We will change our ground. Take us, boatman, nearer that point. If you have no success there, we will try better and more distant ground.

AMICUS. What you call a point, I would rather call a headland, it is so bold; and how finely wooded! Those dark Scotch firs here have a grand effect. Were I to give way to

feeling for mere enjoyment, I should be tempted to follow the example of yonder lone angler, who has cast anchor, and who is fishing listlessly, I presume, for perch.

PISCATOR. Regarding him, I may repeat the words you said this morning, but in a different sense, *haud invideo, miror magis!* I should be sorry for our angling to be a dreamy pursuit. Rest assured, the more active it is, with exercise for its object, and recreation, the better and more healthful it is. The trouts are not in a taking mood here. Let us away to the islands. If anywhere, there we are most likely to do better. We will trowl by the way with our flies and with my artificial minnow. The distance we have to go is about four or five miles; nearly half the length of the lake, which is reckoned ten, or by the boatmen, tempted perhaps by their interests to make the most of the distance, twelve. And I may add now, in reply to your former inquiry, that where widest it is about a mile, and where deepest about forty fathoms. This depth, and the vast body of water, commonly secures it from freezing. During the many years I have known the lake, I have only once seen it frozen entirely

over; and that was in the ruthless winter of 1854-55, which, in the annals of war, and the sufferings and losses of our brave army, was as memorable as that of 1812-13 (when it was also frozen over) for the disastrous retreat of the French under the first Napoleon. This brings the East to my recollection, and especially the Bosphorus, for the resemblance of Windermere to the Bosphorus is remarkable. Both have the appearance of noble rivers; indeed the latter is a salt-river flowing constantly from the Black Sea into the Sea of Marmora; both are skirted by high grounds and ornamented with villas, groves and gardens. I remember once, on entering the Bosphorus from the Black Sea, hearing a Turk from the highlands of Asia Minor, remark (it was his first visit) "he had never before a just idea of Paradise." Might not an observation somewhat of the same kind be expected to come from the denizen of one of our great manufacturing towns on first coming in sight of Windermere. Which of the two is most beautiful, it may be difficult to determine. Windermere has the advantage in its girding mountains, ever varying in appearance with the state of the atmosphere, and the degree and

direction of the sun's light, especially towards its rising and setting. The Bosphorus has its advantage in the cypress groves rising here and there along its shores, in the stateliness of some of its palaces, its picturesque minarets, and in the purity and azure blue of its waters, and I may add in the greater animation imparted to its course, not only in the many graceful caïques constantly plying in its channel, but also in the innumerable sea-fowl, many of them as graceful, there in restless movement, and from being unmolested, showing a strange (to us strange) fearlessness of man. Nor let me forget another peculiarity and charm in this month, of which Windermere is destitute, the nightingales, which abound in its groves, and early and late fill the air with melody. Perhaps you may consider the wandering voice of the cuckoo, the song of the thrush, and of the many warblers which come to us so pleasantly over the water from the nearest wood, a tolerable substitute. Pray think so. Were we a fortnight later, we might have a pleasure which I never experienced on the Bosphorus, the breeze scented delicately and deliciously by the lily of the valley, a flower growing wild and abun-

dantly on two or three of the islets we are approaching, and which from that circumstance are named "Lily of the Valley Islands."

AMICUS. How gracefully the ground on our right rises and falls! all the minor hills below the mountains have the same soft perfect lines of beauty.

PISCATOR. That is in accordance with the general character of the district, here remarkably well exemplified; and which, as I have before said, I believe is referrible to glacier action, the tendency of which is to remove by its grinding operation all asperities.

AMICUS. What a contrast between that massive, dark, rectilinear castle and the cheerful green bosom-like hill on which it stands! What is its history? I hope there are legends and tales of romance associated with it. Has it a drawbridge and wet ditch, and other appurtenances of a baronial stronghold?

PISCATOR. Observe it carefully, and you will no longer entertain such a hope. That is Wray Castle, and is altogether a modern building, and erected by its present proprietor and inhabitant, who has too much knowledge of sanitary conditions to surround himself with stagnant water,

making an enemy to health where there is no fear of neighbouring hostility. As to the structure itself we need not criticise it : it is well placed, and at a distance may well pass for what you supposed it to be, and have the desired effect on the uninformed mind and the careless eye. On the other side, a little lower down, you may see the grand chimneys of Calgarth, that which was once a hall now a farm house, with which some traditions are connected, and a story, too marvellous to be true, of a skull which had no resting place out of Calgarth, resuming its place as often as it was removed. As well authenticated, I may mention, that Windermere itself occasionally exhibits singular phenomena; one of them of a spectral appearance. What think you of a white horse, such as the spectre war-steed of the O'Donnough at Killarney, being seen passing over the lake; and what of an iris on its surface rivalling a rainbow? One has been vouched for by a popular writer, who says he witnessed it himself; the other by a man of science, to whom we are indebted for valuable information respecting the meteorology of the district, especially for a record of its rain.

AMICUS. Of course the one is as much a natural appearance as the other. The phantom horse, I suppose, you will agree with me, may be referred to a flitting mist somewhat of equine form, and the rainbow iridescence to reflected broken light from a sooty film spread over the surface. In this manner, the latter, if I recollect rightly, was explained by the scientific observer.* As we proceed along this shore, so finely wooded on our right, with its succession of rocky promontories, where already the broom is in flower enlivening the dark heath, one may well dispense with angling,—trowling, I would say, at least, for the first voyage, is an appropriate manner of fishing, nowise diverting the attention. What is that secluded embowered house just coming into view?

PISCATOR. That is Bellegrange; and probably because it is so solitary and so embowered in wood, it is often without a tenant; and yet few spots are more beautiful or have in immediate proximity pleasanter walks or drives, or are more favourably situated for enjoying the

* Mr. J. F. Miller. See New Ed. Phil. Journal.

beauties of the lake and its sports : proof, is it not, that solitude and seclusion are not attractive to social man? We are now near the island and our fishing ground, and let us be prepared.

AMICUS. Really these wooded islands are charming. Here Windermere, I think, rivals Killarney! What an intricacy of channels! What an admixture of headlands and islands! Did you not assure me that there is a greater extent of lake below, I should have supposed that here is its termination, the view beyond is so entirely intercepted.

PISCATOR. This is the island region of the lake, — the islands its Cyclades, if I may so call them; they and their grouping suggest the name; they are twelve or thirteen in number. All of them are uninhabited, excepting the largest Belle-island, on which a modern house has been built after the manner of the Pantheon at Rome, on the site of an ancient mansion that belonged to the fighting race of the Philipsons, which in the time of the Great Rebellion, when surrounded by a Parliamentary force, stood a siege under the most daring of the family, “Robin the Devil,”

that daring Cavalier whose iron head-piece is now hanging in the parish church of Kendal.*

AMICUS. This is an angler's paradise, if the sport be any way in proportion to the surrounding beauty. There! I rose a fish, and he is hooked, and now he is landed; a nice trout of at least three-quarters of a pound, an auspicious beginning.

PISCATOR. You were too sanguine. Not another rise have we seen, either at the natural or artificial fly. The boatman says the fish are sulky, and he augurs a change of weather. See, the Old Man of Coniston is almost hid in mist, and clouds are collecting about all the higher mountains, and how fine is the effect of the at-

* The siege was raised by his brother, with a force from Carlisle; we are told, that "the next day being Sunday, he with three or four more rode to Kendal to take revenge of some of the adverse party there, passed the watch, and rode into the church, up one aisle and down another." But not finding the person he was in quest of, he "was unhorsed by the guards on his return and his girths broken, but his companions relieved him by a desperate charge; and clapping his saddle on without any girth, he vaulted into the saddle, killed a sentinel, and galloped away and returned to the island by two o'clock. Upon the occasion of this, and other like adventures, he obtained the appellation aforesaid of *Robin the Devil*."—*Nicholson and Burn's Antiquities*.

mospheric haze and low clouds in increasing their apparent altitude ! This nearest islet is one of the Lily of the Valley Islands. You must land on it, for such a spot is not of every-day occurrence.

AMICUS. I have enjoyed our little island ramble. Never before have I seen the charming flower that gives a name to the islet growing wild, and never I think, before, have I ever seen such a variety of native wood in so small a space and such a variety and profusion of wild flowers. Here is a handful that I have collected, the primrose, the blue bell, the lesser celandine, the wood anemone, the ranunculus, and others with which I am not familiar.

PISCATOR. I regret that the pride of the island, the lily of the valley, is not yet in flower ; had it been, another sense would have been gratified. A charm of this island and the adjoining ones is that they are without entangling brakes or marshy swamps, are dry, and everywhere accessible, as if under a kindly influence checking the growth of all that is noxious and offensive, affording shade and shelter without closeness ; a spot, where a Jaques might rest and meditate ; and where, at

the foot of yonder yew-tree, you might almost expect to see a philosopher of his mood recumbent. Now to our boat again, and homeward : and on our way we will trowl for charr, using the lath, that you may witness the kind of fishing that I promised you should see. Fisherman, pray get your tackle ready.

AMICUS. This lath-tackle is cumbrous and troublesome. It may be killing, but the managings of it cannot be agreeable. I see the board, which you call the lath, is worked on the principle of the boy's kite. What is the length of the main line and what that of the droppers to which the minnow-baited hooks are attached ?

PISCATOR. The main is about sixty yards ; the first dropper about twenty-four yards, with eight yards of gut ; the second about twenty-two, and the third, the last, that nearest the board, about twenty, each with the same length of gut as the first. You see the boatman fastens the end of the line to a pole which he fixes erect, and now that he resumes his oars, and impels the boat gently through the water, he fixes his eyes on the line with the hope of seeing it vibrate, the sign of a fish being hooked.

AMICUS. My patience is exhausted. A good half-hour has been spent in this lath-trowling and fruitlessly. It is getting cold, and I am getting chilled. Let us give it up and hasten home. I shall be glad to take an oar. The mountains that are yet visible are getting darker and darker. We shall be fortunate if we escape a wetting before we land. The fisherman tells me that last spring, in this very month, he took in one afternoon two dozen and three charr, fishing where we are and in the same manner. I can hardly credit it.

PISCATOR. I am not displeased that we have had no success with the lath; I should be better pleased were it always the same. That it occasionally is a murderous method cannot be doubted; indeed, apart from that it has nothing to recommend it, and I am sure it will never be liked by the genuine angler, who does not angle for his bread, but for recreation and exercise. We will land at the confluence of the two rivers; and in our walk home I shall be able to point out the remains of a Roman encampment preserved not in stone but in turf, which, however paradoxical it may appear, is often more enduring.

AMICUS. What a width of purple brightness is given by that great copper-coloured beech expanding its young leaves in the grounds of Croft Lodge! I never before felt disposed to admire this variety of tree. Whilst at a certain distance, I saw distinctly the outlines of the encampment, which you say was Roman, now I am near they have disappeared. It seems strange, considering the nature of this country, that the Romans should have penetrated into it. What could have attracted them?

PISCATOR. That they were well acquainted with the district is certain — there are so many vestiges of them, in forts, encampments and roads; of the latter, the most remarkable being along the summits of one of the higher mountain ranges, still known by the name of “High Street.” What the attractions were must be matter of conjecture: if mere love of enterprise, extension of territory, and the lust of conquest and possession, were not sufficient, under the impulse of which they overran and subdued so large a portion of the ancient world, — rest assured, it was not the beauty of the scenery, of mountain, lake and forest that drew them here. The taste for these, the cultivated taste, is modern.

AMICUS. True ! That same love of enterprise, of contending with and overcoming difficulties, that same love of distinction which impelled the early navigators in their hazardous voyages, the same that has gained us our Eastern empire, and which is never or rarely absent from the energetic man. Even in our sports, our river and field-sports, do not we see the same displayed, though in a less marked but more harmless manner than in the field of blood and strife — unless, indeed, the greater exertions and triumphs, those of conquering armies, lead, as was long the case amongst the Romans, to a better government and an advancing civilisation ? We are losing sight of the river and lake, both objectively and subjectively, if I may use these far fetched metaphysical terms, and too soon I shall have to retrace my steps, rather, I should say, returning as I purpose to do by the express train, rush back to busy and hurried city life. Let me here, for where I can do it more appropriately, thank you for the pleasure I have had in your company in this your Lake District and in these our fishing excursions.



COLLOQUY XIV.

Sunday and Sunday Musings.

AMICUS.



THANK you for having persuaded me to stay over the Sunday and for having taken me to your new church. I admire its interior, and even more its situation, commanding from the rising ground on which it stands and from its position such charming views both towards your mountains and lake. The memorial windows too in which it is so rich, especially those to the poet and his female relations, to which you specially called my attention in the Wordsworth — chapel, if I may so call it — pleased me much. They are a grateful and graceful tribute, and addressed to the eye are the more likely in their sentiment to reach the hearts

and understanding of the uneducated, and excite a desire to know the poet and his writings.

As I stood admiring the prospect, looking towards Windermere and feeling the mild breeze from the lake, so auspicious to angling, I was not without a longing to be afloat on its surface, or by the river side rod in hand.

PISCATOR. I have often on a Sunday experienced the same temptation ; and when a younger man and with somewhat more latitudinarianism, and amongst Roman Catholics, I have occasionally given way to it, where by so doing no offence would be given, reconciling myself to the yielding with the reflection that such gentle exercise on solitary and secluded waters was a better mode of spending time than idling it in desultory talk or in thoughts as desultory. And the old fisherman who was usually my companion, himself a Roman Catholic, was even more strongly of my opinion, and always concluded, when his opinion of Sunday fishing was asked, with saying, "We might do things very much worse." Let me add, that when we did fish on a Sunday, it was only when the weather was peculiarly tempting, and that we engaged in it, as well as I remember more

sedately, and made it, even more than common, "the contemplative man's recreation."

AMICUS. I can easily imagine that in such situations as those you allude to, amongst the gentle murmurs of the ever-flowing water in its course to the ocean, there to find its rest for a time, analogous to our rest in the grave, as the vapour which rises from the same ocean may be held to be analogous to the resurgent spirit; or on the secluded lake,—there may be an almost involuntary disposition to serious thought and religious musings, especially on this day, whatever the form of creed,—a recurring from the past and present to the mysterious future, that mystery of mysteries, beginning where life, mortal life, ends. But even with this admission it is best, I think, to shun the temptation, and make the Sabbath a day of rest.

PISCATOR. Yes; but not after the Jewish fashion; remembering that "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." Let it be a day of rest from toil, and devoted to man's higher wants, religious and intellectual, including such pursuits, I would even say

amusements, as tend to raise him in the scale of being, and make him better and happier.

AMICUS. On a second visit to Donegal, attracted there again by the pleasure I had in my first, that made in your company, spending the Sunday at Gweedore, and abstaining from angling, I went to the Catholic chapel, about five miles from the hotel, situated in a wild spot, a desert of sand and bog; the sand hills skirting the sea, the bog constituting the land. There I witnessed an interesting scene; some hundreds of people collected from all the country round, all neatly and cleanly dressed, and orderly behaved; some arriving on horseback, man and wife on the same horse, he in the saddle or pad, she behind holding by him, seated on the crupper, but more on foot, the men commonly walking apart and so the women, and the latter, whether married or single, distinguishable, the former wearing a cap, the latter their heads naked, their hair neatly and becomingly parted and plaited. The form of service was that of the mass, high mass, and was performed with all its due rites, and attended to on the part of the people with all due reverence. Indeed, the ceremony in its forms and effects

seemed to me a striking instance of the instinctive religious feeling belonging to man ; the ceremony to the majority of the congregation, as regards the words, being in a dead language, to them an unknown tongue ; and yet the effect, notwithstanding, as I believe, a decidedly religious one, and I would hope one beneficial to their minds, the grand idea of a divine sacrifice being known by all to be involved in it.

PISCATOR. Again I think you are right. I am disposed to be very liberal in regard to all religious ceremonies, and an optimist more or less in respect of them. It has fallen to my lot to witness the worship of pilgrims, prostrate on the summit of Adam's Peak, one of the highest mountains of Ceylon, before the supposed impression of the foot of Buddou which has rendered that mountain sacred ; to have been present in the gallery of the Mosque of St. Sophia, in Constantinople, during the worship in the bare area below, when hundreds of voices were raised in solemn prayer from the prostrate assembly ; and also to have been present like you at a Roman Catholic mass, both in the humble chapel in the wilds of Connemara or Donegal, and amidst the gorgeous splendours of the Sistine, and of St.

Peter's, and the quire of that other grand architectural creation, the Domkirche, the Cathedral of Cologne. I will not compare the ceremonies, nor need I pass any opinion respecting them ; but this I will say, that I could not but see belonging to each a devotional feeling in common, separating as it were, stages of existence ; carrying the mind with its aspirations from the present to the future, and breathing the *non omnis moriar* ; in brief, affording in the religious feeling expressed one of the strongest marks of humanity, and of the difference between man and the brute that perishes.

AMICUS. How well for mankind had it been, had such a liberality as yours been more common, especially in past ages ; then history would not have had such dark and terrible pages detailing the persecutions of the strong over the weak, on account of difference of religious persuasion.

PISCATOR. Truly so ; nor so many glorious pages recording heroic firmness, the enduring strength of faith, the conquering and triumphant mind.

AMICUS. The heroism of the martyr in the history of our kind compensates, shall I say, for

the brutal cruelty of the bigot ; but that is too strong an expression, and perhaps unjust, and yet I hardly know a more appropriate.

PISCATOR. Let us hope that some of the severest persecutors acted from a sense of duty, and sternly under that belief overcame their humane feelings.

AMICUS. Are you not stretching your charity too far, when you say some of the severest ? What think you of an Alva, or of a De Montfort ?

PISCATOR. That they were cruel men, and acted in accordance with their disposition. But even in their case, we may make some allowance for character formed as theirs was mainly in the camp and field, in war, where life is thought lightly of, where there is so little regard for it and for human suffering ; and duty and sacrifice are the leading ideas in the genuine soldier and competent leader. But I must admit, and I speak from some experience, that one of the worst effects of war is the manner in which it hardens the heart of man, and overpowers the ordinary feelings of humanity.

AMICUS. On the other hand, is not this sense

of duty, this readiness to sacrifice life at its call, one of the redeeming circumstances of war? calling out the heroical spirit like that of the martyrs, which makes light of all that worldlings most value; and acts as a check to that softness and effeminacy which peace, ease, wealth, and indulgence are so apt to engender, and by engendering, conduce to the decline and fall of nations.

PISCATOR. I would fain hope it may be so; but I am not sure that it is so. I doubt very much that war improves the individual character, and if not the individual, I do not see how it can the national character. Its evils are tremendous. When it is entitled to the quality for which you give it credit, I apprehend it must be experienced by those who engage in it on justifiable grounds, and with unquestionable motives—*pro aris et focis*—for what is most dear and honoured, for religion and liberty, in which great risks are run, great sacrifices are made; such wars as the ennobling struggles of the Netherlands against the Spaniards; of the United States of America that earned them their independence; of our own country in the instance of the “Great Rebellion,” when the

chain of absolute power that endangered our liberties was broken for ever.

AMICUS. Having nothing to offer in reply to your reflections but to express approval, allow me to turn the conversation to another subject. What we have been talking of, part of it so shadowy, has called up the idea of dreams in my mind, especially of one I had last night; and which, though yourself not a dreamer, knowing that you take an interest in them as mental phenomena, and as occasionally helping to elucidate the obscure and mysterious, I am tempted to relate, if I may task your patience.

PISCATOR. You excite my curiosity; pray proceed.

AMICUS. I fancied I was at home; that it was night; that leaving my room with the candle, the light was extinguished; and that then walking upstairs in the dark to go to bed, from above, I saw a light below, and supposing it to proceed from a candle carried by a servant, I called to have my candle relighted; at that instant, I awoke. Now, listen to what follows; it is the remarkable part. When awake, the light continued before me; I saw it not only

in the room, but also when directing my eyes to the bed-cloathes, to the white sheet, which almost enveloped my face, there it was; but closing my eyes again, all was darkness. My belief then was, and still is, and I trust you will agree with me, that the luminous appearance on waking was merely a continuance of the idea or impression in sleep. And this granted, may we not reasonably infer that in the same manner ideas, impressions of forms and persons experienced in sleep, renewed cerebral actions, on waking may be preserved for a few seconds, and be considered as spectral illusions, or by the vulgar as spectres or apparitions.

PISCATOR. I see no objection to your inference. Even when waking, the impression is not lost the instant it is produced; it has more or less of duration; thus, on extinguishing a candle, where there is no other, a light seems to hover around it for a perceptible moment of time, when we know no new rays of light are emitted, and all that were produced have passed away. Had the whole occurrence you describe in its several parts taken place in your bedroom, and had you, on suddenly waking,

seen not only a light, but the bearer of the light, nothing would have been wanting to constitute a ghostly apparition, especially were the bearer a deceased servant or friend. Though you courteously give me credit for not being a dreamer, I could relate instances of dreams I have had, similar in their significance to those of yours, and others somewhat different, which I would designate as day-dreams, recurring vivid ideas not produced at the instant, *ab externo*, and yet, not distinguishable from such. First I will tell you how I saw the spectre—do not laugh,—of a crucible! It was when I was at College, and engaged in chemical studies. Reading, reclining on my sofa, and it was by day, I saw a platina crucible which I valued falling from the adjoining table. I sprung up to try to save it, but grasped only air; no crucible was there, neither fallen, falling, or on the table; it was, as I before said, a spectral crucible. Next, of a person; this I witnessed when still a young man; and it was in Kandy, in Ceylon, and in mid-day. Reading at a table before an open window looking into a garden, I saw, on looking out, a gentleman, an acquaintance, a man of singular appearance,

and like no one else, whether in figure or dress, pass before me. I fancied he had come to pay me a visit, but he did not come in ; then, I supposed he had mistaken the door, and had gone to the next ; I sent my servant to see ; no, he was not there, nor had he been ; there was a sentry at the outer gate ; I sent to know if he had gone out ; the reply was, he had not come in ; I sent then to his house to inquire where he was, and the answer returned was, that he was then in bed, his habit being to sit up during the greater part of the night, and to be a-bed during a good part of the day. Now, suppose this gentleman had been found dead in his bed, how impressive would have been the coincidence ! what a capital ghost-story would have been realised ! So singular were the habits and appearance of this gentleman, so lank and shadowy his form, so spiritual his nature, that a friend of mine to whom I related my experience, jocosely said, " I do not believe in your philosophical explanation ; rest assured that our acquaintance, at the time you saw him, was abroad in the spirit, luxuriating in his higher existence."

AMICUS. What you state is interesting, es-

pecially as solitary examples, if they were so, and not like these recorded of Nicolani, who, you know, for a time, when troubled with deranged digestive organs, saw phantasms innumerable, simulacra of the living and dead, often in rapid succession. Pray, at the time, was your health anywise deranged?

PISCATOR. I was in my usual state of health, and at the time leading an active life, and free from all cares,—excepting, on the latter occasion, those connected with our position, for it was during a rebellion, and it was very questionable whether we had sufficient force to put it down, or even to resist the enemy, had we been vigorously attacked; but I was young, as I have said, at the time, and even insecurity and the hazard of unequal war preyed then but little on my mind.

AMICUS. Of old, in the Homeric times, dreams were held to be from the gods, and for beneficent ends. I sometimes indulge in this antique notion, or at least fancy that they are not altogether useless and wasted; and I am disposed to think that those of our fellow-mortals most familiar with grief and bodily suffering will most readily adopt my

opinion. I knew a man who had an ill-tempered wife of the Xantippe class; he never, he assured me, dreamt of her, but occasionally of a new attachment to a creature charming in body and mind. And, since I have become an angler, it has not been after enjoying the sport that it has recurred to me in sleep, but, on the contrary, when for an unusually long time I have been so situated as to have been deprived of it.

PISCATOR. I like your optimism; and believing there is "good in everything," either manifest or latent, I will not exclude dreams; they may be for higher ends than those you allude to; they may be useful as connecting the material with the immaterial, the palpable and sensuous with the purely ideal, the present with the past, without regard to common time; and so to excite reflection on the higher spiritual nature of man and speculation on his destiny, associated with that most comforting and to be cherished aspiration of the *non omnis moriar*. And now, as the night is well advanced, and you have to leave early to-morrow morning, let us say good night. I shall be up "to speed the parting guest,"

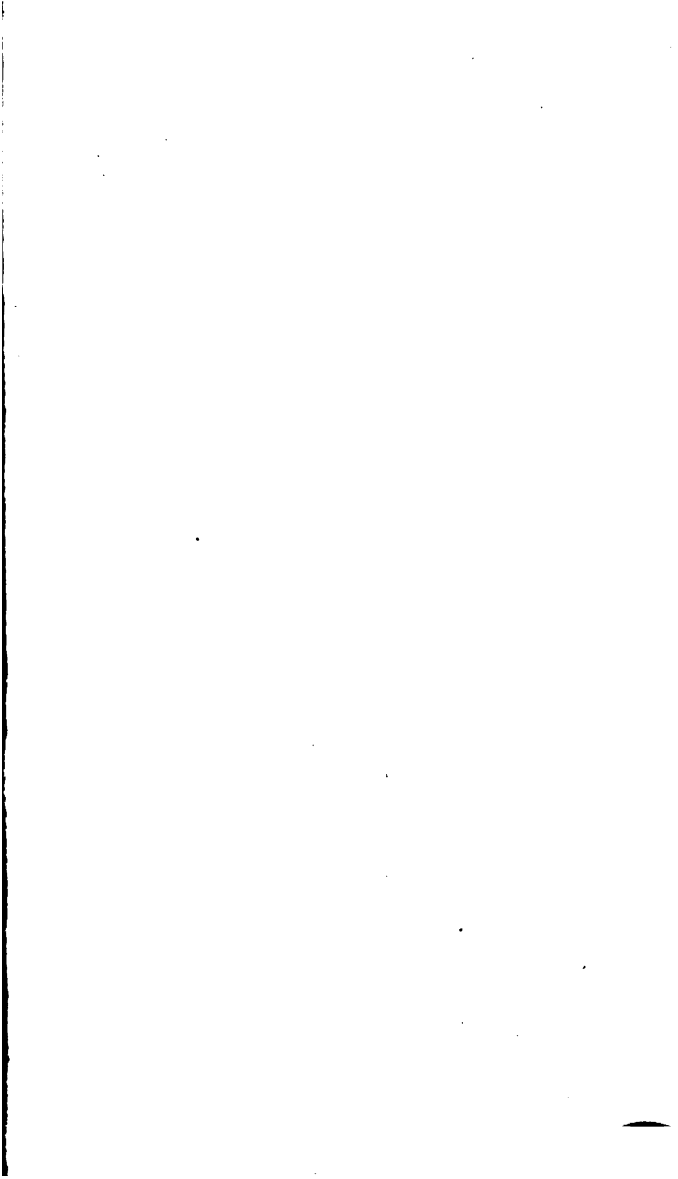
though with reluctance, and pray remember your promise, make a note of it, that we are to meet again in autumn, and that in compensation for the bad angling here in our Lake District, I shall have the privilege of conducting you to some of the best, such as the island of Lewis affords. And there, in addition to the pleasure of the very best of sport, you will have an opportunity of seeing much that is interesting and peculiar in that wild country in its transition state, under the influence of a beneficent and enlightened proprietor, from waste into culture, from rudeness into civilisation.

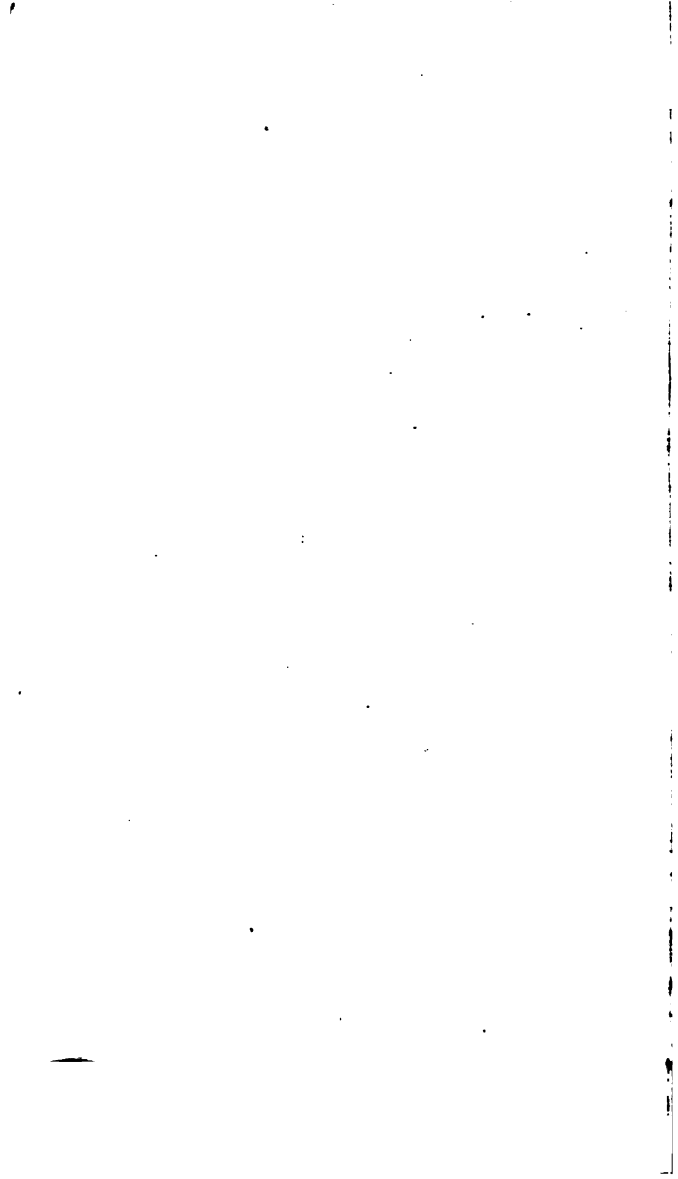
AMICUS. One attraction might suffice,—two will be doubly binding. Good night.

THE END.

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